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ISSUE 85 · OCTOBER 2003 · £4.99

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Cut the cables and set up your own wireless network – we show you how easy it is on page 22

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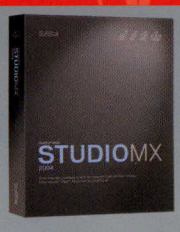

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Issue 85

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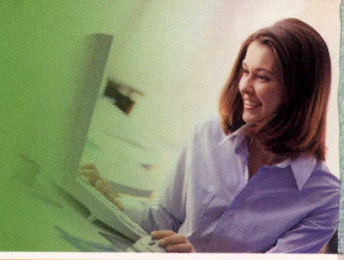

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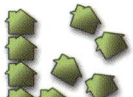

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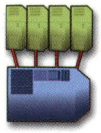

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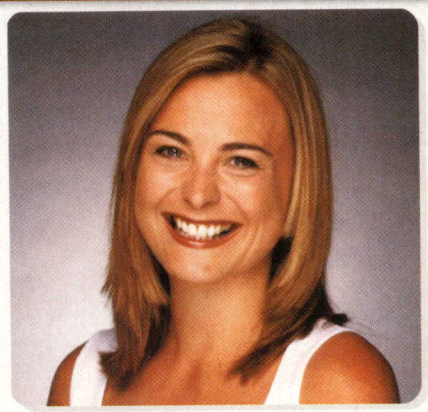

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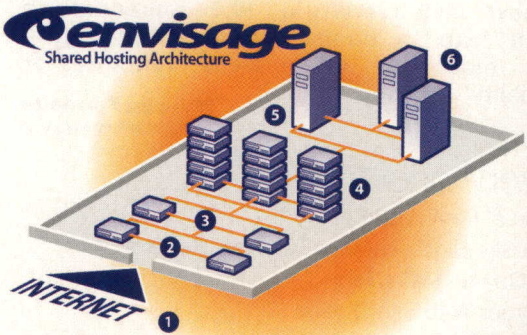

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Welcome

THE *PRACTICAL INTERNET* TEAM TELL US ALL ABOUT THEIR FORMER PEN PALS

James Thornton
Features Editor

"When I was at school I had a pen pal who was in hospital and I used to write her cheery letters to get her spirits up. I hope she's okay now."

Mark Billen
Staff Writer

"I had a brilliant pen pal for ages. It was a biro from New York that you turned upside down to reveal a naked lady. There's not a day goes by I don't think of that ol' friend."

Colleen Johnson
Sub Editor

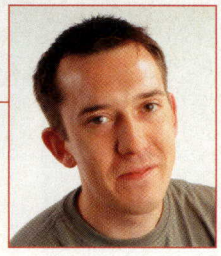
"As a kid in South Africa I had a pen pal in England called Elaine who always wanted me to come and visit her. And here I am! Elaine, are you out there?"

Nicky Bartlett
Senior Designer

"At uni, an old man sent a letter to me. I sent it back, saying it must have been the wrong address, but he replied with the longest, strangest letter in the world."

Matt Budd
Multimedia Editor

"I met someone on a trip to Russia. We started writing to each other when we got back, but I stopped when I realised she'd nicked my Sonic Youth cassette."

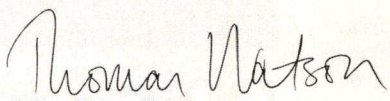


Editor's welcome

Isn't it weird how expressions change so quickly? Just a few short years ago, anybody using the word 'wireless' would have been laughed at for referring back to the days when the whole family sat round the radio at night to catch the latest hilarious outpourings of Spike Milligan and chums.

Nowadays, though, wireless is one of the hottest topics around, and we're currently all scrambling around to ditch the cables in favour of a wireless lifestyle. Since the Net became the biggest thing since Mr Hovis carved up his mum's loaf with a knife, we've been experiencing technological revolutions seemingly on a monthly basis, but wireless really does have the air of something that's set to change people's lives forever. If you think about it, we've had the Net technology in place for years – the only thing that's been holding us back from taking it any further is mobility. Until recently, we've been chained to our desks, but a world where we can all connect to each other from anywhere on the planet isn't so far away.

Even if you're not a big technology freak, you can't help but be impressed by the possibilities. I know I am, which is why we've devoted our cover feature to wireless networking this month. Check out page 22 for more information.



Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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Each issue of *Practical Internet* contains detailed features on the latest Net topics, brought to you by our team of leading writers. We cover a variety of subjects every month to ensure that you get the complete picture. Our comprehensive news section brings you the latest Internet developments in an unbiased and impartial style.

Expert help
Practical Internet is devoted to making your life as hassle-free as possible, with dedicated sections for Web design and browsing help. With more workshops than our rivals, we aim to keep you up to date with the latest techniques. What's more, our workshops are only written by experts, so you can expect excellent results every time.

Independent advice
We realise how important value for money is, so we provide impartial buying advice every month in our reviews section and buyers' guides. We also provide regular ISP round-ups, in addition to money-saving features to keep you informed of the best deals around – and to ensure you carry on getting the best from the Net for less.

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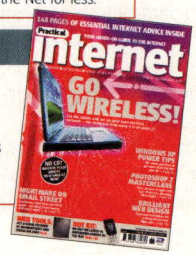

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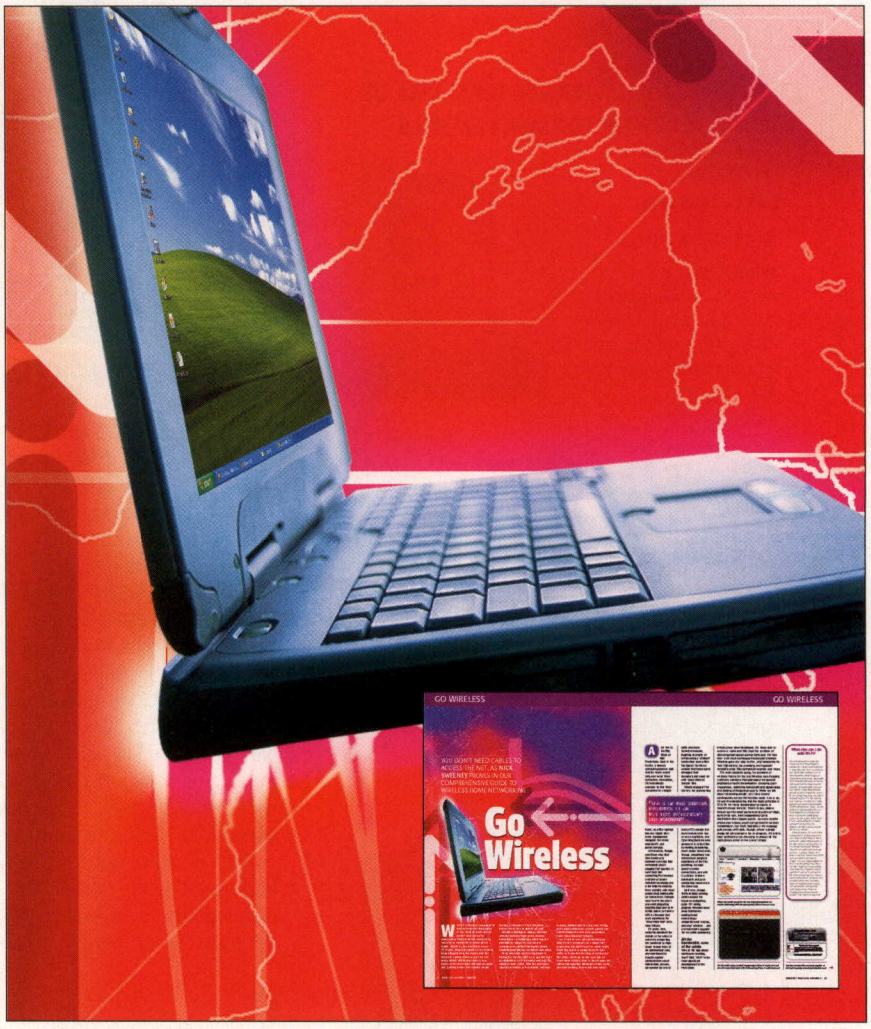

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With so many of you owning more than one PC, we show you how to set up your own home network and embrace the wireless revolution at the same time

Web browsing

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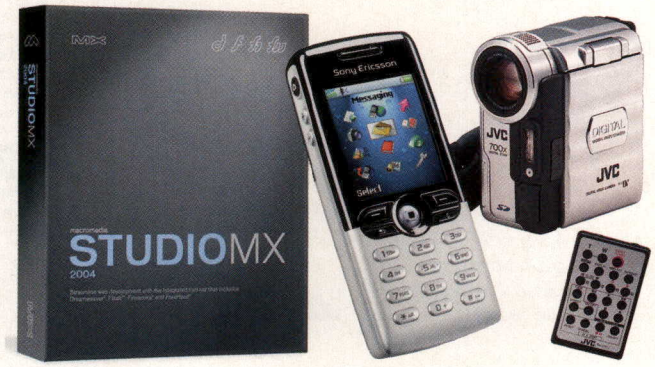

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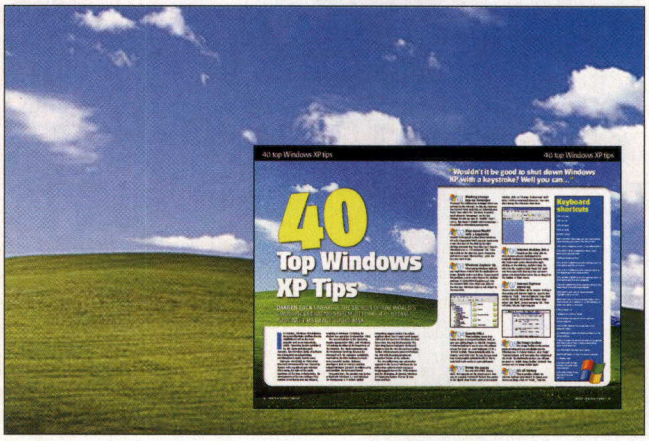

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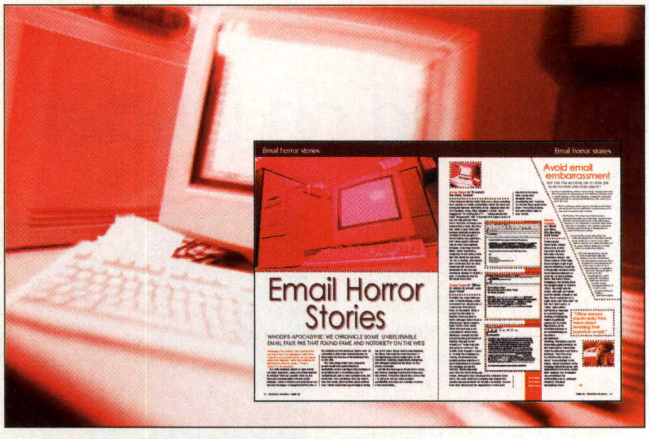

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News

All the latest Web sites, products and services

Sobig is so bad

DOUBLE TROUBLE AS BLASTER AND SOBIG RUN RIOT ACROSS THE INTERNET – AND EXPERTS WARN THAT THERE'S MORE TO COME

THE NOTORIOUS SOBIG F virus has scooped the prestigious title of the biggest bug of all time. The mass-mailing worm has lived up to its name by causing havoc in hundreds of thousands of homes and offices across the planet, as anti-virus firms call it the worst virus ever.

At its peak, mail filtering firm MessageLabs (**www.messagelabs.com**) stopped more than a million copies of the latest variant of Sobig in a 24-hour period. At one stage AOL scanned 40 million attachments in one day and found more than 23 million copies of the worm.

MessageLabs reckons that one in every 17 email messages now contains the Sobig virus – a much higher ratio than the previous biggest threat Klez.H, which cropped up once in every 138 mails.

Speaking after the virus first struck on 18 August, Mark Sunner, Chief Technology Officer at MessageLabs declared: "Yesterday marked an unprecedented new level in virus propagation and demonstrated the growing ability of virus writers to disrupt business around the globe."

Forging ahead

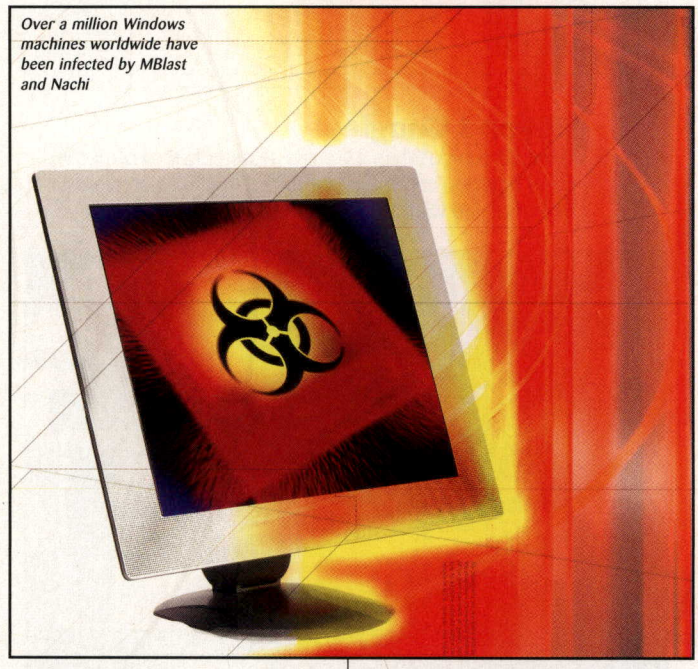
Like previous versions of the virus, Sobig F does its damage by forging the source address of every email it sends, using addresses it garners from the Windows address book or from cached Web pages. It sends a copy of itself to the addresses in an email message, carrying subject headers like 'Your details', 'Thank you' or 'Re: your application' and is contracted in the first place by opening the attachment it comes with.

"The virus makes people think that they have been hacked, because they see the emailer notifications that have bounced back," said AOL spokesman Nicholas Graham.

Sobig F followed just days after the MBlast virus, and its variant, Nachi, tore through the Net, bringing corporate networks across the world to their knees. Symantec says that MBlast and Nachi have infected over a million Windows machines worldwide, with the number of infections from the variant surpassing that of the original worm. Businesses affected included Air Canada, which was forced to cancel flights because its network couldn't cope with the data load generated by Nachi.

"EACH VARIANT RELEASED SO FAR HAS EXCEEDED THE PREVIOUS ONE IN GROWTH AND IMPACT" MARK SUNNER

The immediate threats posed by Sobig and MBlast (or 'Blaster') have largely been averted, as many anti-virus firms quickly made free removal tools and patches available to download from their sites. However, experts are already predicting that the brain behind the Sobig virus is learning new tricks with each new variant and is likely to be back with a 'new and improved' virus in the near future.



Over a million Windows machines worldwide have been infected by MBlast and Nachi

"The Sobig virus writer's use of an inbuilt expiry date indicates that he is committed to inventing new and improved versions," said Sunner. "Each variant released so far has exceeded the previous one in growth and impact during the critical initial window of vulnerability."

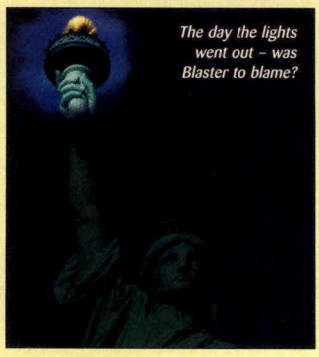
US blackout blamed on Blaster

WAS VIRUS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT SWITCH-OFF?

BESIDES WREAKING HAVOC in inboxes across the UK, the Blaster virus is being blamed for the blackout that left much of America in the dark for hours.

Rumours circulating on geeky Net sites such as BugTraq and Slashdot suggest the worm may have caused the meltdown of the grid's computers. The theory is based on the fact that many power plants run a Windows-based Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCANDA) system that receives remote commands through the same Remote Procedure Call protocol used by MSBlaster.

Part of the SCANDA system's job is to control the amount of energy that each plant processes, meaning if it was crippled by the bug it could lead to a power outage. While at the time of going to press the cause of the huge blackout still isn't known, the FBI is denying it has anything to do with Blaster.



The day the lights went out – was Blaster to blame?

shorts

→ Google's toolbar has been revised to make Web surfing even easier. Apart from offering direct searching without the need to visit the engine's site, it allows quick submission of page ratings, pop-up blocking, Web form filling and instant access to tools such as Google's calculator.

→ Seiko and CEC are whipping up a storm in China with their futuristic wrist phones. Similar to regular watches, the units can either be used to signal calls to a Bluetooth handset or conduct conversations via a wired earpiece worn like a ring. Early examples however, remain as clunky as their $1,000 price tags.

Got a news story?
Please contact
James Thornton
Telephone: 01202 209379
Fax: 01202 299955
Email: jamest@paragon.co.uk

Microsoft rocks

GATES, NOT GARETH, MAKES HIS FIRST FORAY INTO SELLING RECORDS WITH MSN MUSIC CLUB

FOLLOWING APPLE'S SUCCESSFUL iTunes service, Microsoft has teamed up with OD2 to launch its own online equivalent.

MSN Music Club allows users to buy downloadable audio from a wide selection of artists, and is thought to be the first European pay-as-you-go site of its kind.

Single releases, including exclusive 'Gold' examples that pre-empt high street shelves, range in price from 75p to £1.19. In addition, full albums are available from £7.99 upwards and tracks can be accessed from Windows Media Player or the shop site directly.

With a catalogue exceeding 200,000 songs from five of the biggest record companies, the service is on a par with Apple's, which has proved extremely successful since launching Stateside. iTunes sold more than five million records in its initial couple of months, although Microsoft is seen to be stealing a march on its competitor by tapping the overseas market.

The move comes after a decision by some of the industry's leading labels to revise stringent licensing requirements, with many top bands also rethinking their marketing policies.

This includes ageing rockers The Rolling Stones, who after a lengthy reluctance to commit to digital download distribution have jumped on board. Fans can now get their hands on various songs from the band's extensive career exclusively on RealNetwork's Rhapsody service. It should signal a turning point for these new retail initiatives, which have been criticised in the past for the notable absence of such major recording artists.

It really is a small world

TESTS REVEAL THE POWER OF ELECTRONIC MAIL FOR UNITING PEOPLE GLOBALLY

A RECENT EMAIL experiment claims to give credence to the notion that the world's inhabitants are acquainted by a mere number of contacts.

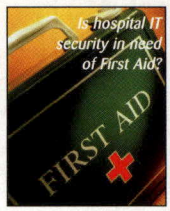
Findings have revealed that a message may only need to be forwarded between five and seven times to be delivered to almost anyone with an inbox.

The exercise was inspired by a similar 'Small World' experiment conducted during the Sixties, and asked volunteers to send on mail to colleagues, friends or family. It was hoped that at each stage users would select correspondences thought to be closest to a randomly picked target. Successes included a chain spanning five previously unconnected participants in Eastbourne through to Novosibirsk in Russia.

Medical mix-up

EMBARRASSED HOSPITAL HIGHLIGHTS PROBLEM OF DATA GOING AWOL ON USB DRIVES

BOSSES AT A Manchester hospital have examined their IT security policies after a USB memory stick containing confidential data was found by an estate agent.



The mix-up occurred when the hospital's computer supplier used the device to back up information being deleted from a recalled machine. Subsequently the USB drive was sold on as 'new' to another customer, much to the apparent dismay of both parties.

Medical records pertaining to 13 cancer patients were found on the stick, and although a resulting inquiry cleared staff of negligence, it serves as a stark reminder of the responsibilities health authorities must face.

In fact, the increasing popularity of portable USB storage facilities has led to concern from organisations in both private and public sectors. IT departments have been warned that the small scales of the units, coupled with the vast capacities, will undoubtedly make data theft more prevalent.

Wireless broadband

BROADBAND PROVIDER TELEWEST INTRODUCES THE COUNTRY'S FIRST WIRELESS INSTALLATION

UK RESIDENTS CAN now get access to a wireless broadband connection with Telewest's new self-installation pack for its Blueyonder services.

Retailing at half the price of BT's equivalent, the £35 product utilises the cable modem in the company's TV set-top box with Netgear technology. Users can then move freely around without the hassle of cables.

Telewest Broadband

Connection speeds for the kit range from 512Kbps to 1Mbps, and trials by 1,000 Blueyonder customers have been very successful: "No other British ISP offers a wireless broadband installation," explains Telewest's Chad Raube, "and we can now provide one at a price that puts most of our competitors' standard self-installation packs to shame."

Star struck

WE ROUND UP SOME MEMORABLE AND NOT-SO-MEMORABLE MANUFACTURED BANDS THAT HAVE FOUND A PLACE ON THE NET

The Monkees
www.themonkees.com
These guys were probably the first purpose-built band. They starred in their own kitsch TV show and were intended as the US answer to the Beatles. At first they couldn't play but they learnt how, and any lingering fans should seriously enjoy this URL.

Sex Pistols
www.sex-pistols.net
If manager Malcolm Mclaren is to be believed, the darlings of punk were pretty much manufactured. Drafted together from various bands, with front man Johnny Rotten added after karaoke-ing to Alice Cooper in Mclaren's Sex shop, this site celebrates the legendary outfit.

One True Voice
www.onetruevoice.com
The losing combo of ITV's *Popstars: The Rivals* lasted just two tacky singles, with manager Pete Waterman washing his hands off the boys. Their drippy songs were in stark contrast to the sassy Girls Aloud, and this official band site struggles to keep the dream alive. →

News shorts

→ Outlawed music swap shop Napster is set for a Christmas comeback. 'Napster 2' will legally offer users the chance to purchase and download tracks online, after Roxio bought the company for £3m last year. It is hoped that its now infamous name in Web history will entice punters once launched.

→ Coors brewery has teamed up with drinks dispensing firm IMI Cornelius to trial a new multi-pint pulling machine. The device, which could spell an end to queuing at the bar, can serve pints in five seconds and should enable staff to pour ten in less than a minute – cheers!

NEW Software

FIND OUT ABOUT THE LATEST AND GREATEST SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

3DS Max 6

www.discreet.com

£2695

The recent Siggraph exhibition in California saw Discreet's launch of the latest product in its acclaimed 3D rendering range. 3DS Max 6 is a professional package that enables designers and developers to achieve exceptional levels of production. Aimed at those working at the cutting edge of digital entertainment, including movie effects and video games, the software comes with the endorsement of SEGA and should hit shelves this autumn.

ColdFusion MX 6.1

www.macromedia.com

£929

With customers including the likes of Casio and Nissan, it's easy to see why Macromedia's ColdFusion range is so highly rated. The latest version continues to offer unrivalled power in the production of Web services and applications. As well as enhancing general performance, it includes updated support for Windows, Solaris and Linux. What's more, the suite clocks runtime speeds that exceed its predecessor by 172 percent, while sending dynamic email is 50 times faster.

VCOM Fix-it Utilities 5

www.guildsoft.co.uk

£29.95

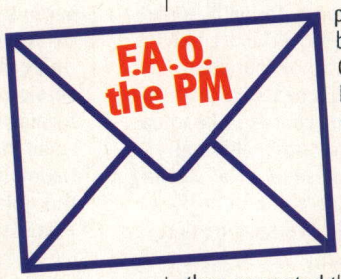
This latest PC diagnostic and repair kit allows users of all levels to maintain their machines. Features include powerful anti-virus protection powered by Trend Micro, a crash correction facility for non-booting systems and an integrated Registry fixer. There are fault correction tools for a selection of drives and an easy-to-follow guide for dealing with emergencies.

→ PM gets mail

LABOUR'S MAIN MAN FINALLY RECEIVES AN OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS AFTER CHEEKY CRITICISM FROM OPPOSING PARTIES

PERHAPS IN A response to our report on his lack of an inbox, Tony Blair has since confirmed that his own personal address has been set up.

Plainly not amused or satisfied with his tongue-in-cheek Hotmail account created by swiping opponents, the Prime Minister has seemingly listened to his own rhetoric on running an 'e-government'. The move promises to open the floodgates of correspondence that Mr Blair already receives, with pen and paper letters alone exceeding 750,000. Eager writers can find the new address on the Government's **pm.gov.uk** site, while Conservative spokesmen have wasted no time reminding followers that 'quiet man' leader Iain Duncan Smith is also reachable online.



Tony Blair had previously been berated in the Commons for being among a select band of leaders without email, which included Robert Mugabe and Fidel Castro. It then prompted the Tories to register the PM for Web mail, with 'RtHonTonyBlair@hotmail.com' the chosen destination. It now seems that the Labour hierarchy has acted swiftly to counter any further derision, and taken back claims that email provision would have been 'impractical'.

BT cranks up broadband

ADSL USERS SET FOR SPEEDY CONNECTIONS

Broadband users are set for even faster Net access, following the launch of a new 1Mbps ADSL trial by BT.

From October, ISPs will be able to offer lightning-quick connections to their users. Offering 1Mbps, the service is around 20 times faster than dial-up access, and nearly twice as speedy as standard ADSL services.

The six-week trial of IPStream 1000 will be offered to ISPs by BT Wholesale, and will be music to the ears of gaming addicts and file-sharing junkies.

A spokesman for BT told BBC News Online: "This trial will be open to home users who want to upgrade their existing connections to give them much bigger download capacity for things like interactive gaming."

All toned up

SALES OF CHART SINGLES COULD BE DWARFED BY PUBLIC'S APPETITE FOR PHONE TONES

THE MOBILE DATA Association, or MDA, has estimated that sales of ring tones will reach the £70 million mark this year.

This suggests an increase of 60 percent on last year's figures of £40 million, and has prompted record companies to sit up and listen. It had been thought that the popularity of polyphonic TV and chart renditions would harm already flagging sales of singles. However, with conventional sales still commanding around £156 million in 2002, the expected boom in ring tones should still fall way short of a possible eclipse.

This hasn't stopped the music industry revealing that profit margins on mobile equivalents of popular hits are indeed considerably higher, with punters often paying upwards of £1.50 for new examples. Younger phone users are especially known to frequently update their phone's tones, within a playground culture that can't get enough of the gimmick.

A cool ring tone has become the latest must-have accessory

"A lot of the things they used to do, like swapping football cards, have changed now to getting the latest ring tone," explains retailer Buongiorno Vitaminic's Mark Stannard.

Stat attack

Top ten ring tones

HERE'S THIS MONTH'S RUNDOWN OF THE MOST POPULAR DITTIES ON RINGTONES-DIRECT.COM

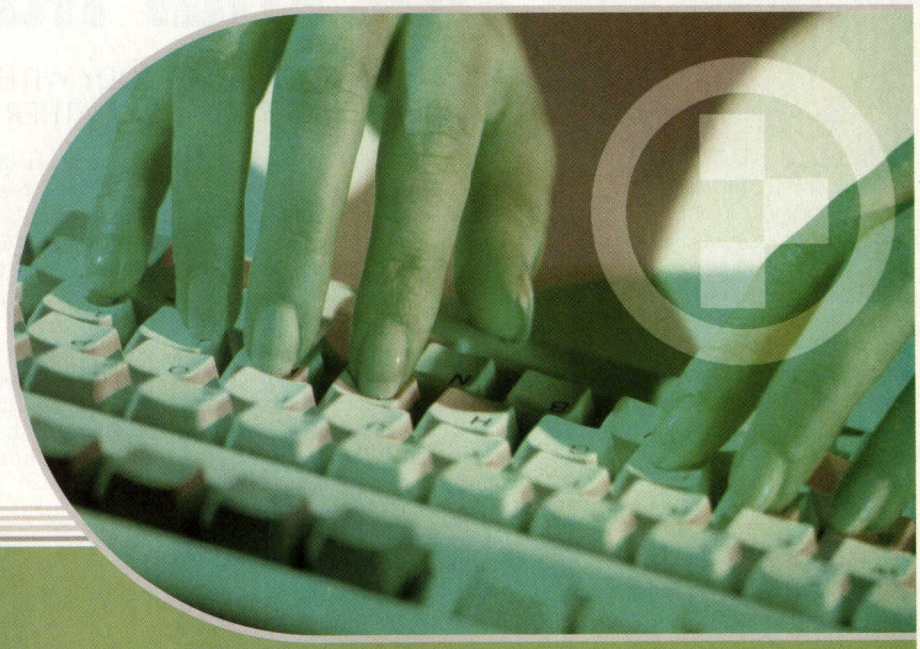
1. Phoenix Nights – TV theme
2. The Exorcist – Film theme
3. Coldplay – Clocks
4. Blu Cantrell ft. Sean Paul – Breathe
5. Xtm and DJ Chucky – Fly On The Wings Of Love
6. Ultrabeat – Pretty Green Eyes
7. Pirates Of The Caribbean – Film theme
8. Mr Benn – TV theme
9. Beyonce Knowles ft. Jay Z – Crazy In Love
10. Guns n' Roses – Sweet Child O' Mine

→

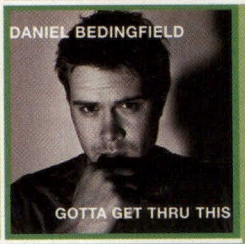
SURFNEARN

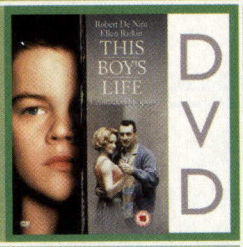
WWW.SURFNEARN.NET

Get Payed As You Go!



Sony Clie
PEG-NR70V
Points: **ONLY**
1,530.00





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News

shorts

→ Ask Jeeves has undergone a revamp to ensure that users get the most relevant search results possible. Among the improvements is a 'Related Search' tool for pinpointing topic areas, a recommended links feature from a panel of experts, as well as an image retrieval engine and general site streamlining.

→ 'Buy a laptop, prevent a baby' is the slogan being used by a surprising partnership between Evesham Technologies and Mates condoms. The PC manufacturer's student division 'e2students' intends to give away free contraceptives with every machine sold before the end of September.

Net watch

INTERNET FREEDOM'S **CHRIS ELLISON** MONITORS THE LATEST ONLINE DEVELOPMENTS

GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED, SCAREMONGERING. That is the only sober assessment of the panic back in July over runaway schoolgirl Shevaun Pennington's five-day escapade. It transpires that 12-year-old (older looking) Shevaun ran away from home to meet up with 31-year-old US ex-marine Toby Studebaker. The front pages of the papers were pre-occupied with questions about where they had travelled, whether Studebaker knew of Shevaun's real age, and the revelation that Studebaker had previously been accused of having sex with an underage girl. These days any allegation of paedophilia is

"CHILDREN NEED TO FORM RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER, AND WITH ADULTS TOO"

mud that definitely sticks. But the key ingredient that made the story run for ages is the means by which they met: an Internet chat room.

Obvious questions like: "Why was Shevaun able to leave home with her passport supposedly for a trip to the shops?" and "Why did she not want anyone to know where she was really going?" weren't even raised. No time was lost before commentators condemned the ease by which children could form relationships over the Net. Some argued for adult-moderated chat rooms. BBC technology correspondent Bill Thompson even called for teenagers to be banned outright from using chat rooms.

Children need to form relationships with each other and with adults too. Developing independent relationships is an essential part of growing up. The fact that the Net makes it easier to do this should be applauded not condemned.

Internet Freedom can be contacted on ***campaign@netfreedom.org****. The campaign's Web site is at* ***www.netfreedom.org***

→Got your number

INITIATIVES TO GIVE ANYBODY WITH A TELEPHONE NUMBER A WEB PRESENCE GATHER PACE IN KOREA

SOUTH KOREA IS the latest company to support the introduction of a simpler Internet addressing method.

The 'Enum', or electronic numbering system, was in fact developed in Europe and looks to unify the addressing of mobile or domestic phones, email and fax. It's a proposal that could allow users to enter a telephone number into the browser address bar and gain access to a range of contact details for the identified person.

The system had originally been scheduled for commission by Korea's Ministry of Information this year, with technical problems cited for the apparent delay. However, the country sees the scheme as an important way to further unite telephony with the Web. Already the US has agreed to support pending plans, with Australia another country said to be keen on future adoption. Many predict that Enum could revolutionise online communications completely, and would certainly change the way current URLs map to their destinations. Users will theoretically be defined by their phone number, including their particular international access code. An example of +44 01814 654321 would therefore be mapped to an IP-style address not too dissimilar to 1.2.3.4.5.6.4.1.8.1.0.4.4.e164.arpa.

Any changes are unlikely to affect ordinary Web users directly though, with traditional domain-naming conventions remaining and any work concealed behind the browser.

Founded on work carried out drafting the RFC 2916 protocol in 2000, Enum's backing from a growing list of 13 countries should see widespread trials instigated very soon.

The Enum system aims to unify the addressing of phones, email and fax

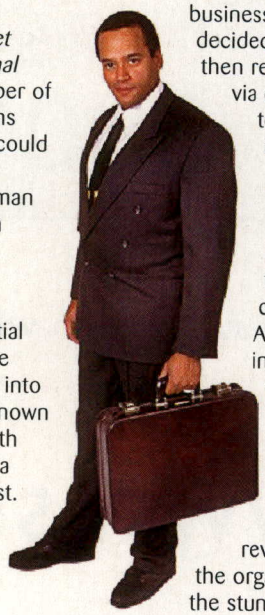
Hoax of the month

ONLINE INVESTMENT BANKERS GET SOLD ON FICTIONAL SHARES AND LOSE A PACKET

A GROUP OF fraudsters have been rumbled selling non-existent shares.

Reports in the *Puget Sound Business Journal* suggest that the number of British and Irish victims duped into the scam could be considerable. A Manchester businessman was said to have been taken in, and Alpha Fasteners in Brecon, Wales, admitted to having lost a 'substantial amount of money'. The company was conned into dealings with a little-known Zurich firm called Smith Fairchild, heralded as a major venture capitalist. After researching bogus claims about buying shares in a legitimate business on the Web, Alpha decided to splash out. It then received a certificate via courier, attributed to Sun Biometrics in Seattle.

Alarm bells started to ring when a second proposition came through for another company, telling Alpha that its investment was 'doing very well but they needed to pay an extra bond'. The Financial Services Authority was duly informed, who revealed that none of the organisations quoted in the stunt had ever existed.



A considerable number of businessmen lost money to the fraudsters

Cheese lease

SWISS CATTLE ARE PIMPED OUT ON THE WEB FOR DAIRY PURPOSES

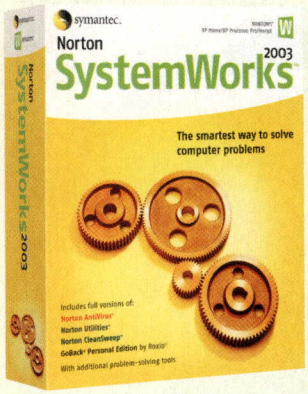
ONLINE CHEESE FIENDS can now hire their own cows, with the entire adopted animal's produce going to the surrogate owner.

The scheme was dreamt up by farmer Paul Wyler because he was unable to sell the amounts of cheese he was harvesting each year: "We've already had dozens of enquiries from people wanting to rent one of our cows," he told Lausanne daily *Le Matin*. Each cow costs 380 Swiss francs for the summer and Paul rents a number to local restaurants.

The service has been made easier by the farmer's decision to post images of the herd on the Web – buyers previously needed to visit the livestock in person.

→ Leading ISP Freedom2Surf has implemented an open-source spam-filtering system that it claims already sees off 80 percent of unsolicited mail. It rejects messages based on the IP addresses of recognised spammers and is free to all customers on dial-up and broadband packages.

→ A new ISP has been set up that allows pay-as-you-go Web users to collect points for their time spent online. Surf 'N Earn from V Two One uses a loyalty scheme that customers can redeem on the integrated site. Items on offer range from electronic gadgets and videos to kitchen equipment and CDs.



Symantec spam scam

COURT RULES IN FAVOUR OF SOFTWARE GIANT IN LEGAL BATTLE OVER COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS

US COMPANY CD Micro has been found guilty of distributing pirate versions of Symantec's software.

Ironically, its criminal activities were discovered after its spamming campaign sent promotional emails to Symantec by mistake. When authorities realised that the cheeky company was offering illegitimate versions of its own products, the matter was taken to court.

A summary judgment was handed by the United States Court in Oregon, as opposed to trial by jury, with damages to be decided. Symantec claims CD Micro amassed profits in excess of $3.3 million for the copyright-infringing goods, and has filed for the relevant amount.

"The judgment against CD Micro is another critical step in our ongoing efforts to combat the proliferation of counterfeit software," Symantec's William Plante told Silicon.com. "The software may not work, causing damage to a computer system or leaving the system unprotected."

Changing rooms

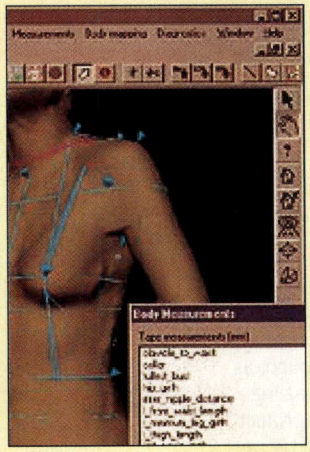
FASHION POLICE SOON TO BE PUT OUT OF BUSINESS BY DRESS-SAVVY SMART BOOTHS

BRITISH-BASED DEVELOPER QinetiQ is pioneering digital imaging technology that could be installed in changing rooms to tell customers what garments best suit them.

The company, formerly the Defence Evaluation Research Agency, originally worked on the techniques for weaponry purposes, but will now aim to corner the consumer and security markets.

Approximately six 3D cameras will be situated in each cubicle and used to gather measurements from over 1,000 areas of a person's body. Specialist software programs will then interpret the information and map certain clothing types that best suit the individual.

QinetiQ is already in talks with retailers over the system, with cameras costing as little as £30 each to mass produce. "The size, weight, accuracy and low cost of our device automatically lends itself to retail and a number of other applications," explains Optical Technologies Manager John Bannister, "but we're confident that product designers will appreciate the potential."



"I don't care what QinetiQ says, I know that my bum is still going to look big in whatever I try on..."

iTripped up

THE IPOD'S NEWEST AND MOST ANTICIPATED ADD-ON WILL NOT BE GRANTED UK PASSPORT

A PERIPHERAL THAT enables users to broadcast music on their iPod to an FM radio has been banned from release in Austria, Iceland and now over here.

The UK distributor for the iTrip device has been told that the product, already a hit in the US, contravenes the Wireless Telephony Act of 1949. It states that the use of unlicensed equipment for radio transmission is prohibited, with iTrip's operation on these shores tantamount to running a pirate station.

It may be a hit in America, but this iTrip device is banned in the UK

This is in direct contrast with American law, which has spawned much critical acclaim for the tiny $35 unit across the pond. Residents have been able to transform their iPods into storage hubs for their music, while picking up the audio on home or car stereo systems.

"In the UK, FM broadcasts are allocated for the exclusive use of licensed broadcasters," admitted A M Micro. "No other systems are permitted to operate between these bands. Therefore, use of the iTrip in any FM broadcasting bands is strictly prohibited."

WORLD CLASS SOLUTIONS

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Web Hosting from £49.00 p.a.
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email sales@eliteukserve.net

EliteUKServe.Net

iCandy

Get your laughing gear round this collection of top toys

Big brother is watching

Anyone who sits in work worrying if someone is breaking into their house and stealing the cat can earn themselves a little peace of mind with this handy contraption. The Veo Observer allows you to keep tabs on what's going on at home via remote monitoring from any Web browser. The software package included with the device even comes with support for multi-camera viewing, allowing you to monitor four camera locations at once on a split-screen display.

Product: Veo Observer
URL: www.veo.com
Telephone: N/A

£139.99

Voyage of discography

Vinyl junkies will love this latest innovation from Hi-Space, which allows you to burn your files and music onto what appears to be an old-fashioned long player. It's not all about the aesthetics though, as the nature of the polycarbonate coating enables the discs to permanently protect your data by blocking out harmful UV rays. For the ultimate in collectability, the Carbonsound discs are available in five colours: pink, purple, green, red and yellow.

Product: Hi-Space Carbonsound 80M
URL: www.hi-space.com
Telephone: 01273 603473

£9.99
FOR A PACK OF TEN

Product: Underwater housing for Fujifilm FinePix F410 Zoom and F401 Zoom
URL: www.fujifilm.co.uk
Telephone: 020 7428 0999

£129.99

Make a splash

Tired of taking shots on dry land with your digicam? Why not stick on a snorkel, dive into the deep and explore an octopus's garden in the sea using Fujifilm's latest piece of underwater kit? The water-tight housing allows you to take your FinePix F410 Zoom or F401 Zoom to depths of up to 40 metres and the sealed strongbox looks great to boot.

Product: Toshiba Portege M100
URL: www.toshiba.co.uk
Telephone: 0870 444 8944

£1,499

Take note

If you want to break free of your shackles and experience multimedia on the move, you could do a lot worse than check out Toshiba's latest classy notebook. The sleek Portege M100 boasts a cute 12-inch Poly-Silicon TFT display and a unique Slim SelectBay that can accommodate a number of different devices. With 256Mb of RAM and a 40Gb hard drive, the device has enough in its memory banks to please even the most power-crazed user, and its DVD-ROM drive allows you to enjoy the latest movies on the run.

Look sharp

As the successor to the first flagship Vodafone Live! handset, expect to see the Sharp GX20 springing up in the palms of flash gits across the country before too long. The phone boasts an improved picture resolution, different camera functionality, plus software to edit your shots, allowing you to insert 'comedy' moustaches and the like onto your chums' faces.

Product: Vodafone Sharp GX10
URL: www.vodafone.co.uk
Telephone: 08701 624040

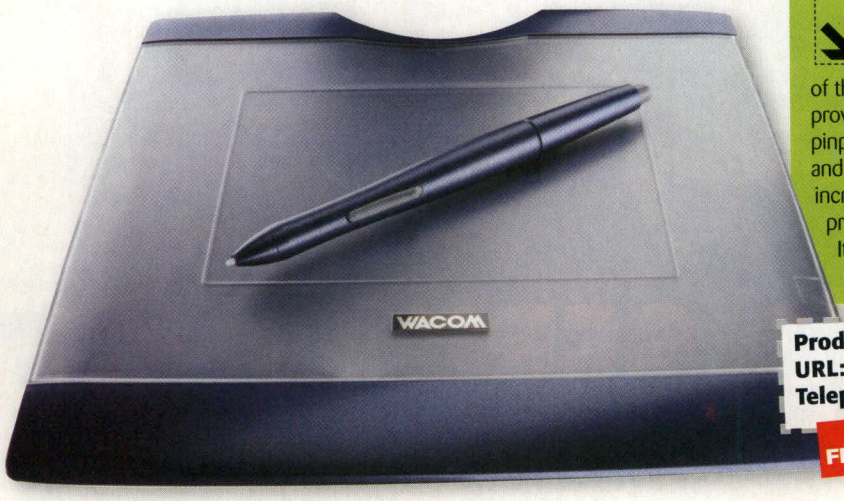
£100/ £200
DEPENDING ON YOUR PRICE PLAN

Product: Amacom ez2disk
URL: www.amacom.co.uk
Telephone: 020 8993 7373

£290

EZ Peasey

As digital creativity continues to grip the nation, more and more people are demanding the sort of disk space that would have only been commanded by the likes of NASA a few years ago. Believe it or not, Amacom's cavernous ez2disk can hold up to 180Gb of data, and its USB 2.0 and FireWire connections mean you can transfer your files in next to no time through a PC or a Mac.



Pens from heaven

Imagine how dangerous Tony Hart would have been if someone had let him loose with one of these babies. The Graphire3 range of pen tablets provides users with a resolution of 2000dpi, enabling pinpoint precision in graphics applications, photo editing and video editing. What's more, the Graphire pen has an incredible 512 levels of pressure sensitivity and a pressure-sensitive eraser for rubbing out silly mistakes. It can even be programmed to create shortcut keys for various functions.

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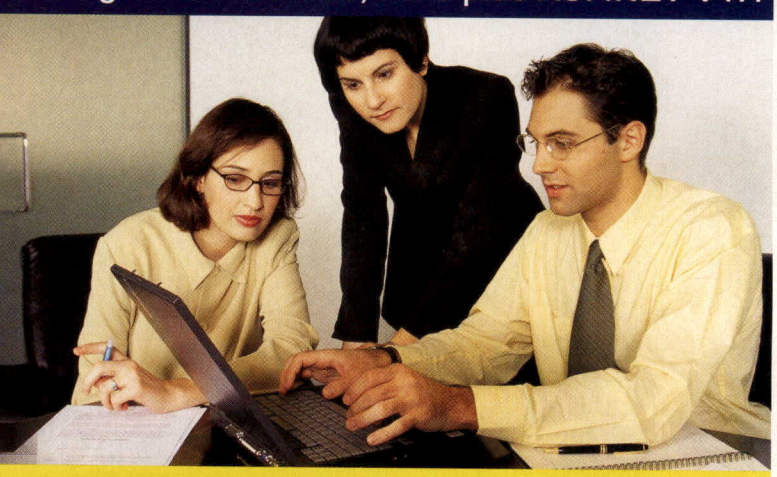

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dope Opera

To answer the question of why *PI* would do a review on Opera, it's a practical way to surf the Internet (it's not rocket science). I spend a lot of time on the computer checking my fantasy baseball teams, making funny love cards for my wife, downloading mus… ahh MP3s, checking the news and such.

Anyway, I read your review on Opera, and installed the software from the free cover disc (thank you, by the way). Since I had recycled Netscape months ago and have been going with IE for some time now I decided to give it a try.

From what I can remember, Netscape was very slow. A flag went up every time a new cookie was installed and you could block it if you wanted to, but it was very slow. Sometimes I would fall asleep waiting for the Netscape home page to load.

IE is okay, but what do you get? A blue bar that (for us dial-uppers) slowly scrolls across the screen. All you know is that when it says 'one picture remaining', you're close and when that blue bar is full, you're there. Try running something like Spybot Search and Destroy and all you'll see is Netscape this, Internet Explorer that, all the way down. Geez, can I get some privacy? Please.

I hear the fat lady singing through my connection. Opera is my default browser. It has a gang of bookmarks to places like Cool Site of the Day, ESPN, Internet Address Finder, Car and Driver, all broken up into groups like health, movies and TV, news, science, research. Besides this, it tells you how many pictures are on that page as well as how many of them you have so far, the current size of the page and the time it is taking to load. That's not all – how about the current download speed? Yes, Opera even tells you how fast (or slow) you are going.

I like Opera. Once in a while with too many pages open I need to close error messages, but at 450MHz and the stress I put my computer through, I'm lucky it hasn't caught fire!

PI, you guys have a cool magazine and thanks again for all the free software. Any time I let a friend at work borrow one, another says: "Ooooh can I get that when he's done?" Why not, it was free.

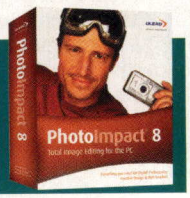
Clifton Gerring

Wow, you really are a bit of an Opera buff Clifton. In fact, you're not the only one, and we're now seeing proof that people are beginning to wise up to life without Internet Explorer. Opera has recently witnessed its ten-millionth download from the site, a feat which is surely causing some disquiet within Microsoft's offices. We're glad you're enjoying your free software as well!

WIN A PRIZE

Not only do you get the immense satisfaction of having your letter printed in the UK's fastest growing Internet magazine, but every month one of our letter writers wins a great prize. Yes, if you write in to us at the address above, you stand a chance of winning a copy of PhotoImpact 8, Ulead's envelope-pushing graphics package.

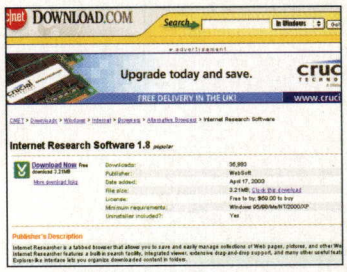
We reviewed PhotoImpact 8 in Issue 74, and loved it so much that we awarded it the coveted *Practical Internet* Star Buy award. Worth a cool £89.99, this is one of the best image manipulation programs around. To find out more about PhotoImpact 8, pop along to www.ulead.co.uk or phone 01327 844755.



Hunting high and low

Your August issue of *Practical Internet* piqued my curiosity with your review on a software package called Internet Researcher. Where can I get hold of some more information? Who is the publisher and distributor of the software? Who wrote the article? Certainly a Web search cannot find it.

Robert Bowman



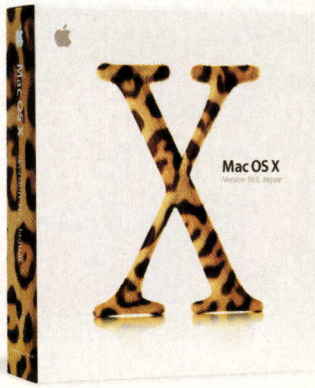
It's certainly a decent program Robert, and you should find it one of the best ways to manage collections of Web pages, pictures and other online resources. We've done a bit of research of our own and found the program lurking on CNet's Download.com (www.download.com). The problem you may have had is that the program also goes under the guise of Internet Research Software 1.8. Good luck with the software, we hope you find it useful.

The joy of X

Could you please advise me of the ISPs that support Mac OS X. This info seems to be quite difficult to find. Thank you.

Barrie Mitchell

To be honest Barrie, most ISPs will allow you to connect to the Net using OS X and when providers

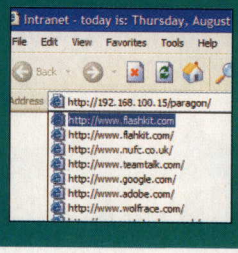


Reader's tip

Get back

I find that if I want to get back to a site that I left a while ago, it's easier for me to navigate there using the drop-down list in the Address bar rather than pressing the Back button a million times. You just click on the Down arrow in the Address bar and pick the address of the site you want to revisit.

Sam Pembroke



Your letters

Subject index

I have been an avid subscriber to your *Practical Internet* magazine for well over three years and I feel loathe to throw away any issue or cover CD. I have been lucky to have letters published in *PI* with, I must add, very thankful answers and find all issues covered in *PI* invaluable, but not always when I need them. This means that, like many of your other loyal subscribers, I find myself thumbing through loads of back issues to find the answer to a problem I have at the moment, which I remember was covered earlier, but is difficult to find.

So why not have a simple subject index for back issues? If not in the magazine then on the cover CD at least.

I do realise that this may be seen as 'negative journalism' in that very common problems will need to be re-published for the benefit of new readers. But would this not generate more subscribers and/or readers when they can see previous topics that have been featured or covered?

I shall forgive you for not publishing this letter.

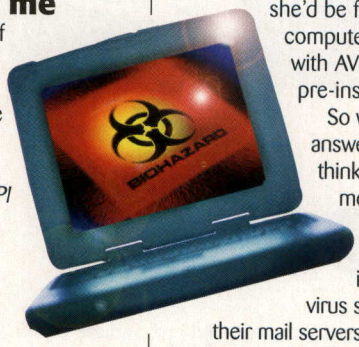
Rick Hanson

It's a good idea, Rick, and we're sure it would eventually make our loyal readers' lives easier. The only problem would be in hiring the workaholic insomniac staff writer who could devote the time to cataloguing everything from our previous 84 issues. We're working on it, though, so don't be surprised if something crops up.

say they don't support the Mac Operating System it's often just to cover their backs, as their tech support staff aren't Mac-savvy. It's normally just a question of putting the correct information into the correct boxes within the 'Internet & Network' menu in 'System Preferences'. ISPs such as BT Openworld (www.btopenworld.com), Freeserve (www.freeserve.com) and WHSmithnet (www.whsmith.net) all have a decent track record in supporting OS X, or you could try a specialist provider such as Gonuts4free (www.gonuts4free.co.uk).

Stop buggin' me

I'm a regular reader of your magazine and, like many others I'm sure, I'm getting more and more frustrated by the world's virus situation. Now, we – *PI* readers that is – all know that we should have AV software installed and updated on our PCs, but the message is still not getting home to Joe Public.



After the last lot of viruses I was plagued with (Bugbear) I discovered one of my clients had it on their PC. I contacted her and she swore she had McAfee installed. After a long conversation, what she actually had installed was a trial version of McAfee which she had never updated from new, and the computer was almost two years old! When I directed her to Symantec's site to do a virus scan, she was understandably concerned when it reported she had over 50 viruses on her PC and her Internet security was zilch!

I fear this may be typical of someone who has purchased a computer but knows little about them, nor wants to know; they just want to write letters and get on the Net. As my client said, the man in PC World told her she'd be fine as the computer comes with AV software pre-installed!

So what's the answer? Well, I think we could move a long way forward if ISPs installed anti-virus software on their mail servers, particularly the SMTP end – to stop them getting out in the first place. However, these suggestion fall on deaf ears. I have a broadband account with NTL and dial-up account with Demon – neither has bothered to reply to my suggestion that they install a first line of defence in this way. I suppose they have shares in Norton and McAfee!

Ron O'Brien

Sorry to hear about the viruses that've been bugging you, Ron. We spoke to Bill Goodland, Director of Internet at NTL and passed on your suggestion. He said: "We take Internet security matters very seriously and have a number of new initiatives in the pipeline. As always, we strongly advise our customers to make the most of the free firewall protection products available."

Looking for a bargain

I've been bashing my head against a wall trying to find somewhere online where I can pick up a copy of Dreamweaver MX on the cheap. Where can I go to avoid paying the full whack for it?

Bernard Cooper

We had a quick scan of some of the cheapest software sites online, and the best we could come up with was £309 at Amazon's Marketplace (www.amazon.co.uk), though you may find it cheaper to visit eBay and see if anyone's prepared to sell it on at a cut-price rate. If you're a student, you can pick it up for a fraction of the price direct from Macromedia.

Attachment of the month

You'd certainly put the brakes on when driving past this sign for the Branxton Lions Club. In fact, we reckon it'd be more effective than the speed cameras we have over here. Thanks to Norbert Peetz for sending us this picture of the witty sign. Keep them coming.

Have you picked up a hilarious or strange email attachment? Would you like to share it with your fellow *Practical Internet* readers? Send it to pi@paragon.co.uk with the subject header 'Attachment of the month'. We'll print the best one in the mag each month.

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YOU DON'T NEED CABLES TO ACCESS THE NET, AS **NICK SWEENEY** PROVES IN OUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO WIRELESS HOME NETWORKING

Go Wireless

Weren't computers supposed to free us from the drudgeries of our lives at work and at home? And yet we've managed to find ourselves confined to cubicles or manacled to home-office desks, baked by the jetstream of our PC's fans, simply because of the need to keep plugged into the mains and the Internet. Laptop owners can't be too smug either. While they have a few hours of freedom until the battery gives out, getting online has usually meant trailing a modem or Ethernet cable behind them like an umbilical cord.

All that is starting to change, however, with the arrival of high-speed wireless networking – a technology which has the potential to change the way we use computers as much as the mobile phone revolutionised the way we talk to each other.

New, ultra-fast wireless hardware is hitting the market right now, and the price of established kit is dropping well into the range of your wallet. With the increased capacity provided by broadband, wireless is going mainstream in a big way, letting users play networked console games and transforming PCs into next-generation home entertainment systems.

So, if you've ever fancied hooking up your home's computers to a single Net connection but didn't want to snake leads down the stairs or gouge holes in your walls, or if you like the idea of surfing the Net while curled up on the sofa, there's never been a better time to throw away the cables and upgrade. Netheads of the world, you have nothing to lose but your wires!

Add this to the Big Book of Bad Predictions: back in the Forties, a famous computing pioneer said that the world would only ever need three computers. Nowadays, it's increasingly common to find three computers in a single home, as office laptops become staple take-home companions alongside the home desktop PC and games console.

Until recently, though, even those who filled their homes with hardware were less than enthusiastic about plugging it all together. It wasn't just that connecting PCs involved a mixture of arcane technical knowledge and a firm belief in miracles. More crucially, with most people stuck behind dial-up connections, it simply wasn't worth the effort: you could ping-pong local files back and forth at high speed, but stick a URL in a browser and you'd experience the 'World Wide Wait' at its most tedious.

For years, then, networks remained the domain of the office or university computing lab, sustained by high-speed 'leased lines' at an astronomical cost, and maintained by irascible system administrators who'd hide in dark corners, surrounded by bits of cable and dusty technical manuals, laughing at people for not knowing a 10-BaseT connection from a Rich Tea biscuit. So it's no wonder that home users shrugged their shoulders and made do with floppy disks to transfer files.

What's changed? For starters, the plummeting cost of PCs means that more homes have two or more machines, and Operating Systems have advanced to reflect this by making networking much easier. Most of all, though, broadband has transformed people's experience of the Net, providing the high speed of office connections, and with it, a desire to share bandwidth and pool computing resources in the same way.

Until now, though, that's entailed running cables around the house or embarking upon DIY wiring projects. Wireless takes away that barrier, making home networking a straightforward 'unplug-and-play' solution – and a revolutionary upgrade for the online community.

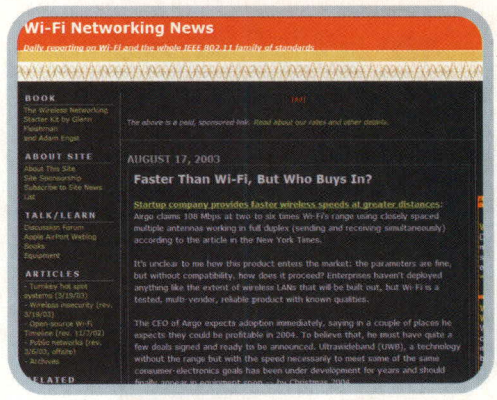
> "Wi-Fi is the most significant development to the Net's basic infrastructure since broadband"

All the bandwidth, none of the cables

Why all the fuss about wireless networking, then? Well, 'Wi-Fi' is the most significant development to the Net's basic infrastructure since broadband. For those able to receive it, cable and DSL fixed the problem of delivering high-speed connections over the 'last mile' from local exchanges into people's homes. Wireless goes one step further, and transforms the 'last 100 metres', by providing much greater versatility once that connection reaches your home.

The main obstacle facing the pioneers of wireless Internet in the late Nineties was choosing a delivery standard that addressed the specific problems of radio transmission: choosing open frequencies, balancing bandwidth and signal range, and dealing with signal dropouts. While we talk about 'streaming media', as if files flowed continuously across the Net like water from a tap, it's worth remembering that the basic principle of TCP/IP, the Net's transmission protocol, is 'asynchronous transfer'. That's to say, data is broken up into small packets at its point of origin, sent on its way, then reassembled at its destination like a jigsaw puzzle. As every mobile phone user knows, much can get lost in wireless transmission, but that's bearable if the message gets across; with data, though, where a single dodgy bit can corrupt a file or program, it's vital to have sufficient error-checking to ensure all the right pieces arrive in the correct shape.

*Where else would you go for the very latest developments on wireless technology than the appropriately URL-ed **www.wi-fi.org***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*For the inside scoop on what's happening in the wi-fi world, you could do a lot worse than head to Wi-Fi Networking News at **wifinetnews.com***

What else can I do with Wi-Fi?

We've concentrated on basic Net access and local networking, but wireless technology has the potential to place PCs at the heart of our home lives. Specialised hardware such as 'game adapters' provide plug-and-play wireless for consoles, allowing for local networked gameplay as well as high-speed Internet action. Another example: with specialised hardware such as the Linksys Media Adapter, you can rip your CD collection onto a PC with a large hard drive, and have it broadcast to your hi-fi. And with the arrival of quiet, pint-sized multimedia systems such as the Shuttle Satellite, and XP's Media Center Edition, it's now possible to use networked PCs in a fully-fledged home entertainment setup, playing and recording both music and high-quality video. Think of it as a cross between the video recorder of the future (or the discontinued TiVo) and the ultimate 21st-century jukebox.

Looking beyond the home, fitting a laptop with a wireless card opens up a range of possibilities for free or reasonably priced wireless access on the road, without having to seek out the nearest Internet cafe. Wireless 'hotspots' are becoming increasingly common: in airports, hotels, train stations and even coffee shops. While most are based in and around London, their popularity suggests that Wi-Fi is set to spread across Britain. And don't forget that many wireless users make their networks publicly available (in spite of our advice not to!). If you're planning a trip, stake out nearby access points using sites such as Consume.net, which provides details of reported nodes ranging from 'operational' to 'speculative'. Strike lucky, and you might be checking your email at Ethernet speeds in the middle of nowhere!

*See how communities can come together at the heart-warming **www.kingsbridgelink.co.uk***

Five great things you can do with a wireless connection

1. Enjoy the culinary delights of James Lileks' Gallery of Regrettable Food (**www.lileks.com/institute/gallery**) curled up on the sofa with a ready meal.
2. Check out the latest newsgroup postings on **uk.rec.sheds** – from the comfort of your own shed!
3. Spend the morning after searching the Web for a hangover cure at **www.hungover.net** – while crouched over the toilet.
4. Wistfully look for a summer getaway on **www.deckchair.com** trying to assemble a patio chair in the middle of a rainstorm.
5. Brush up your knowledge of the Karma Sutra (**users.forthnet.gr/ath/nektar/kma/main.htm**) – well, perhaps not...

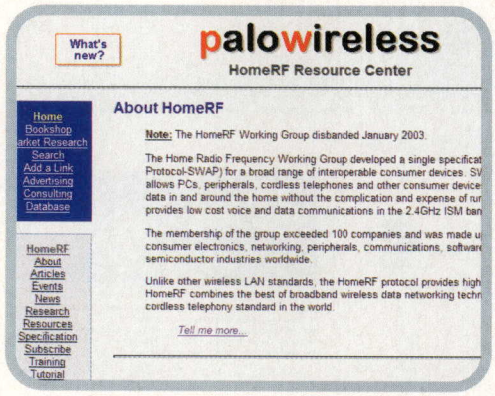
Proving that wireless works, intrepid Nick Sweeney plays with his laptop in a field

The first drive to popularise wireless networks came in 1998, when a group of hardware manufacturers established the Shared Wireless Access Protocol (SWAP) using frequencies already allotted to cordless home telephones. However, their implementation of 'HomeRF', promising a 'connected home' linking voice and data transmissions, never really got off the ground. This was partly because its Jetson-esque vision lacked consumer appeal, partly due to US regulations which limited bandwidth, but mainly because the biggest names in hardware, such as Apple and Intel, chose to leapfrog HomeRF and back the more complex and more robust 802.11b standard instead.

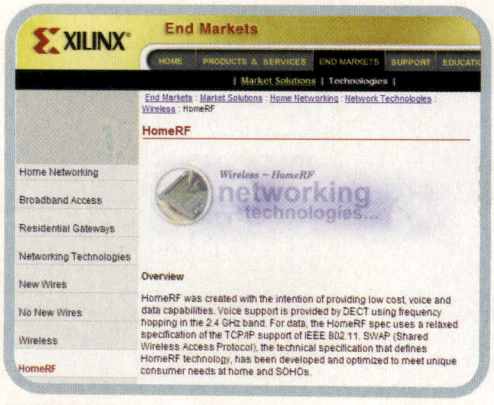
Since then, wireless technology has advanced at an astonishing pace: in 2000, 802.11b hardware was considered 'expensive, complicated and not widely available to the typical homeowner'. Now, however, it's cheap, simple and on the shelves of your local PC store.

As easy as A, B... G?

For the last couple of years, 'wireless Internet' essentially meant 802.11b. That's a mouthful, though, so most people called it 'Wi-Fi'. It theoretically offers a peak speed of 11 megabits-per-second (Mbps) over a range of 120m, which is comparable to baseline Ethernet bandwidth and substantially faster than any inbound home broadband connection. In practice, the average top speed is closer to 5Mbps within 10-20m of the access point, and drops gradually to around 1Mbps as you move further away from the signal – that's still pretty nippy!



*For a bundle of information on all things wireless, you could do a lot worse than head down to palowireless (**www.palowireless.com**)*



*Xilinx produces a range of products in the wireless networking field, so pop along to **www.xilinx.com** for salvation*

Now, though, even Wi-Fi is looking a bit lo-fi, with the launch of not one but two different protocols offering around five times the top speed of older hardware over a narrower range. The heir apparent to 802.11b was, confusingly, 802.11a, which offers a theoretical peak of 54Mbps and average speed of 20Mbps within a total range of 20-30m. It can also support eight overlapping channels, as opposed to 802.11b's three.

Its main advantage stems from the fact that it operates on the 5GHz frequency, which makes it less susceptible to interference from appliances such as microwave ovens which emit similar frequencies. The disadvantage, though, is that this protocol is incompatible with existing wireless equipment – including the vast majority of public hotspots.

For this reason, many manufacturers have chosen to support the 802.11g protocol, even though it was only finalised in June. This standard offers the same top speed as 802.11a over a slightly wider range, but operates on the same 2.4GHz frequency as 802.11b and is backwards-compatible with the slower protocol. With the same channel restrictions and susceptibility to interference as 802.11b, it represents a trade-off between efficiency and compatibility, but one that most users are happy to accept, to avoid having to dump their old kit.

> "Whether it's got '54g', 'Wireless-G' or even 'AirPlusXtreme-G' on the box, it should all work together"

To make things even more confusing, each of the big hardware manufacturers has its own catchy (and trademarked) name for its 802.11g wireless range, perhaps to lure unwary customers into thinking they need to stick to one brand. Don't be afraid to mix and match: whether it's got '54g', 'Wireless-G' or even 'AirPlusXtremeG' on the box, it should all work together nicely.

Finally, for the best of all worlds, you can also buy dual-band hardware that's compatible with all three 802.11 protocols, but like multi-band mobiles, this will come at a cost.

Now that we've got through the science bit, let's get down to business: just how can you get a wireless network running in your home? Well, it'll mean investing in some new hardware, installing some software, tweaking your Windows settings and testing where you get the best signal coverage. But it won't need huge coils of cable or proficiency with an electric saw and wiring diagrams.

First of all, consider which wireless protocol best suits your needs. If you're on a budget and not particularly bothered by the boost in bandwidth offered by the newer standards or just want coverage over a wider range than they offer, you're in luck. As manufacturers push their various 54Mbps hardware, older 802.11b equipment offers a wider range of options and has dropped in price considerably, meaning you can hook up a couple of PCs or a laptop for around £100. (You can always upgrade to 802.11g later, but your older hardware won't run any faster when connected to it.) If you're looking to stream video across your local network or allow file-sharing between several users, you're better off paying extra for 802.11g hardware. In fact, for only £10-20 more per item, 802.11g looks like a smart way to future-proof your setup while remaining backwards-compatible.

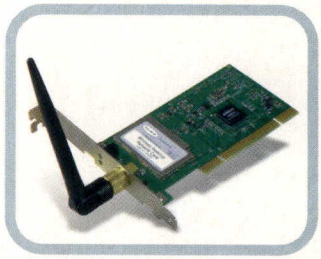
By contrast, 802.11a is the ugly duckling: the hardware is considerably more expensive than 802.11g, and simply not as useful if you're looking to use a wireless-equipped laptop on the road. Unless you have real problems with interference on the 2.4GHz protocols, it's probably best to avoid 802.11a for the moment, and see whether it turns into a swan – or just an ugly duck.

Cheap and cheerful – ad hoc networking

Once you've chosen your protocol, you'll need to consider just what sort of network is best for you. If you have a desktop PC within close range of your outbound Net connection but want to go wireless with your laptop or another desktop machine, the cheapest option might be to set up what's known as an 'ad hoc' network, in which PCs exchange data with each other without relying on any extra hardware in the middle.

For this you need a wireless adapter for each machine, costing from around £50-£60 depending on the protocol. Wireless adapters come in many guises: desktop users can buy standard-issue PCI cards with external antennas, or pay a little extra for hot-pluggable USB adapters if you'd rather not open up your PC. For laptop users, the most common option is a slot-in PCMCIA or CardBus card, but you can also now buy tiny USB 'dongles' that are suited to both desktop and portable machines. Many newer laptops even come with built-in 802.11b networking, either through a built-in card or courtesy of the Intel Centrino chipset.

Setting up an ad hoc network is straightforward, especially if you're running XP. In the past you had to set up an internal network then fiddle with arcane settings, but modern versions of Windows take it for granted that local networks will want to share an outbound Net connection, making configuration much simpler. Start by installing a network adapter on the machine that already has a wired outbound connection. This doesn't have to be a broadband link, but to get the most out of home networking, dial-up usually doesn't come up to scratch. While XP detects some adapters, in most cases you'll be prompted to provide drivers from the manufacturer's installation CD. (Some vendors provide setup programs which take you through getting your wireless card sending and receiving data.)



PCI wireless cards, like this Belkin model, come equipped with built-in antennae

The Linksys setup program also gives you all manner of information on your connection

SIX OF THE BEST: TOP-OF-THE-RANGE WIRELESS HARDWARE

All prices include VAT

1. D-Link AirPlus Xtreme G DI-624 4-Port Wireless Router [£109]
www.dlink.com/products/?pid=6

A sleek, easy-to-configure router which plugs into your broadband modem, providing four wired downlinks and 802.11g wireless networking. D-Link wireless adapters will work out of the box, while other hardware can be set up through a browser-based wizard. There's a built-in firewall so parents can filter unsuitable domains. For more advanced users there's the option to filter data on MAC address, IP address, URL and domain name. It also handles Virtual Private Networking and will support WPA.

2. Buffalo WLI-CB-G54A Wireless Notebook Adapter [£69]
www.buffalotech.com/wireless/products /airstation/wlicbg54a.php

Even before wireless networking entered people's homes, slotting a Wi-Fi card into a laptop was a popular way to stay connected while on your travels, without fiddling with cables and network settings. Buffalo's 802.11g AirStation card is a great way to get top wireless speeds without going over budget. It's easy to configure, especially with XP, and works out of the box with most routers and access points. It supports an external antenna to get the most out of wireless even when you're not in range.

3. Netgear DG824M ADSL Modem-Router-Wireless Access Point [£135]
www.netgear.com/products/ prod_details.asp?prodID=165

If you want an ADSL connection or wish to upgrade your ADSL modem, and need a solution that serves as a modem and handles wired and wireless connections, you can't go wrong with this. It's one of several wireless routers that handles the British PPPoA authentication standard, meaning you can plug it into the phone line – Netgear even supplies a microfilter – and have wireless on tap. The only downside is it runs the slower 802.11b protocol, but if you're not itching to upgrade, it will serve you well.

4. Linksys WMA11B Wireless-B Media Adapter [£152]
www.linksys.com/products/product.asp?grid=33&pri d=554

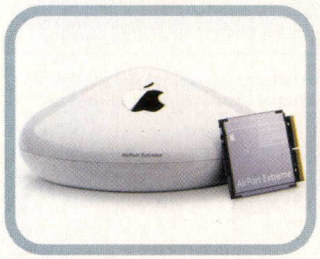
The first of a range of dedicated wireless home entertainment devices, the Linksys Media Adapter plugs into a TV and home stereo rather than a PC, then connects to your local wireless network. Using the supplied remote control you can browse the network for images by file, folder or thumbnail, which are then displayed onscreen. The adapter also serves as a digital jukebox, piping your network's MP3 or WMA collection through your hi-fi. The one downside: it doesn't, as yet, support video.

5. NetGear MA111 USB 802.11b Adapter [£40]
www.netgear.com/products/prod_details.asp?prodID=173&view

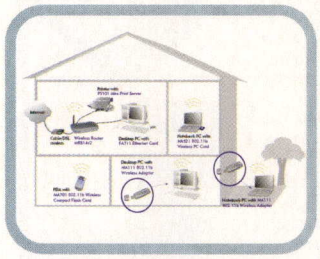
Going wireless doesn't come much easier than this: a pocket-sized 'dongle' that slots into a USB port on either your desktop machine or your laptop. While it's only 802.11b, and there are some processor overheads compared to a PCI or CardBus card, the compensation comes from the ease of installation and the ability to take a wireless connection wherever you go, whether it's at home, at work or on your travels.

6. Linksys WGA54G Wireless-G Game Adapter [£81]
www.linksys.com/products/product.asp?grid=33&prid=558

Console gamers are starting to embrace multi-user networked games and the way they transform the experience. The newest breed come Ethernet-ready, but stringing cables from the lounge takes the fun out of gaming. The plug-and-play Wireless-G Game Adapter (or its Wireless-B cousin) enables both local head-to-head competition and Net-based gaming at speeds which mean you won't be able to blame the lag on getting fragged.



Apple's Airport Extreme offers wireless connectivity to Mac users, and looks good too



Struggling to envisage your perfect setup? Take a butcher's at this configuration

Once the drivers are installed, it's time to configure your wireless network. On Windows XP, go to the Control Panel, select 'Network and Internet Connections', then choose 'Network Connections'. Alongside your existing Net connection you should see your new wireless card listed. Right-click on this entry, select 'Properties', and you'll see the familiar Network Properties dialog box, with an additional tab for 'Wireless Networks'. Select this tab, click on 'Advanced', then select 'Computer to computer (ad hoc) networks only' and clear the box marked 'Automatically connect to non-preferred networks' if it is already selected. This prepares your PC to transmit and receive data on a single ad hoc network. Next, customise things: go back to the 'Wireless Networks' tab and click on 'Add'. You'll be asked for a network name or SSID (Service Set IDentifier); this isn't a password, since it can easily be detected, as we'll see in a moment. Instead, it's designed to avoid conflicts between nearby networks. Pick a name that's uncommon but memorable. Leave the 'Wireless Network Key (WEP)' section blank for the moment – it's easier to secure your network once everything is up and running. If you're not running XP, you'll need to launch your hardware vendor's own wireless configuration utility, and go through the same steps of selecting 'ad hoc' transmission and selecting an SSID.

The heavenly host

Your wired 'host' computer should now have an additional wireless network ready for action, which Windows automatically configures to run on a range of IP addresses dedicated to local networking so that it won't be reachable from (or interfere with) the Net at large. The next step is to set up your other machine, which will work as a remotely connected 'client'. As before, plug in the wireless adapter and install any necessary drivers. This time, though, when you go to the 'Wireless Networks' tab of the Network Properties dialog box (or of your wireless configuration utility), you should see your network's SSID in the list of available networks. If not, select 'Refresh' to seek it out.

Highlight that network, select 'Configure', and click on 'OK'. With any luck you should make a connection straight away, allowing you to share files, folders and peripherals in your local network.

The last step is to enable Internet Connection Sharing so you can access the Net seamlessly from your wireless-connected machine. You can do this manually in Windows XP, by returning to the host computer, opening up the 'Network Connections' control panel, then right-clicking on your existing outbound Net connection and selecting 'Properties'. Choose the 'Advanced' tab, and check the box marked 'Allow other users to connect through this computer's connection'.

If you're using dial-up or an ADSL link that requires a login, you may also want host machines to be able to initiate a connection, though it's usually better to play safe and leave this box unchecked. Finally, unless you have third-party firewall software installed, it's definitely worth enabling the Internet Connection Firewall. (In fact, if you're on broadband and don't have a firewall in place, do this right

Set up a wireless network in five easy steps

Putting together a wireless network can be tricky if you're unaccustomed to the principles and protocols involved. That's because it's generally much harder to work out what's going on if things don't work properly first time round. If you can't make a connection, it's often impossible to see any diagnostic messages that might give you a hint. Add to this the fact that manufacturers' instructions often differ and sometimes even contradict each other. Should you install drivers before configuring the router? Should you enable encryption from the start?

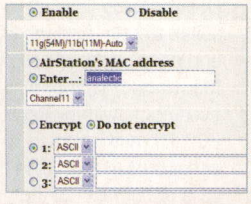
Fortunately, there are a few general rules that should smooth your path to wireless bliss. And to prove that you don't need to stick to one manufacturer's products, and can serve both 802.11b and 802.11g on the same network, we'll show you how to build a simple but robust wireless network built around the Buffalo AirStation g54 combined access point and router (£85 – **www.buffalotech.com/wireless**). It's connected via Ethernet to a cable modem, which in turn provides wireless access to a Linksys Wireless-G laptop card and a pocket-sized Netgear USB 802.11b adapter.

1. Install your router and make the first connection

Your first task is to link your router to your connection. Read the instructions first – these will specify the order in which each device should be plugged in, and which software to install on the first PC. Next, use an Ethernet cable to connect your broadband modem to the WAN (Wide Area Network) socket of the router. Lastly, if there are to be any wired local connections to the router, connect these to an available port. Wired connections should be set up immediately; for wireless ones, you'll need to scan for the new network and connect to it.

2. Name that network in one

Once your router is working properly and you've established a connection from a PC – wired or wireless – the next step is to change the SSID and give your network a personalised name. Fire up your favourite browser and enter the IP address specified by the manufacturer: it'll normally begin with '198.168'. You'll most likely be asked for a password first – check the manual for details – then see a page load providing configuration options. The Buffalo configurator uses the abbreviation 'ESS-ID' to signify the network name. Don't be put off, and make sure you enter a name you'll remember for when you add other machines to the network.



3. Plug in your cards, unplug your cables

Once your network has a distinctive name, it's time to add other desktop and notebook machines. Plug in the wireless adapter – in this case a notebook card – and you'll be asked to install the supplied drivers. If you're running Windows XP, that's all you have to do apart from the inevitable restart. With earlier versions of Windows, you will need to install a wireless configuration utility, which again should be supplied on the setup CD.

now, even if you're not running a local network.) Alternatively, you can launch the Network Setup wizard from XP's Network control panel, then follow its step-by-step instructions, specifying your wired 'uplink' as the external network and your wireless network as the internal connection. After a bit of churning, things should be configured correctly: either run the wizard again on the other machine, or create a Network Setup Disk for older versions of Windows.

Mac users will be silently chortling to themselves. Since the launch of the Airport a few years ago, going wireless with Apple hardware has been a doddle. At least you can tease them about the fact that their wireless access point looks like a prop from Mork & Mindy.

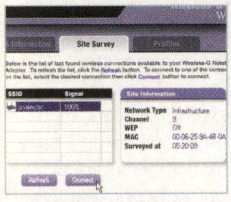
The downside

The biggest disadvantage of 'ad hoc' networks is that the PC with the wired uplink needs to remain switched on to transmit signals – even if it isn't being used for anything else. It's also potentially insecure, as it leaves the host PC visible to outside intrusion unless firewalled. If compromised, it can render your entire local network vulnerable.

> "Since the launch of the Airport a few years ago, going wireless with Apple hardware has been a doddle"

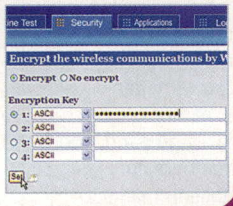
4. Join the networking club

With your network adapter installed, you should be able to fire up the configuration utility or Windows XP's Network Properties dialog box, and see the name you've just given to your router displayed in the list of available networks. Select this network and connect to it. If things don't work smoothly at first, try running a scan to refresh details of the network, or return to the connected PC, open a browser window and check the broadcast channel that your router is using. Repeat this step for all the devices you wish to connect.



5. Secret codes and firewalls

Once everything's running, the final part of building your network is to make it secure. Start by enabling WEP encryption through the router's wizard – Buffalo's WEP configuration is reached in just a couple of clicks – select 'Enable' and enter a passphrase. You'll then need to return to the other machines in the network. Enable WEP and enter the same passphrase. Set up the security features on your router and firewall any connected PCs, either through XP's built-in service or through ZoneAlarm or Tiny Personal Firewall.



More efficient for broadband users, especially if you plan on hooking up several PCs that won't all be running at the same time, is to splash some more cash and buy a separate piece of hardware dedicated to serving a wireless network.

These come in a variety of forms. The simplest and cheapest is an 'access point', which plugs into a cable or ADSL modem through an Ethernet connection, and then provides wireless access to the entire local network. For greater versatility at not much more cost, you can buy a combined access point and router, which lets you share both wired and wireless connections, and can be useful if you have a desktop PC stationed close to your outbound broadband connection. (You'll also find 'wireless bridges' available, but these are designed primarily for existing wired local networks.) For maximum convenience, ADSL users can plump for a one-box modem, wireless access point and router. However, you'll need to make sure it supports PPPoA authentication. The vast majority of DSL modem-routers, made for the US market, only support the simpler PPPoE protocol, and so won't be able to dial out and establish a connection.

Getting a signal

Setting up a network this way is basically the same as establishing an ad hoc network, with a few key differences. First of all, you'll need to set up your router or access point by plugging it into your broadband modem and placing it where the signal won't be disrupted. Higher is better, and try to avoid areas close to microwave ovens and metal structures.

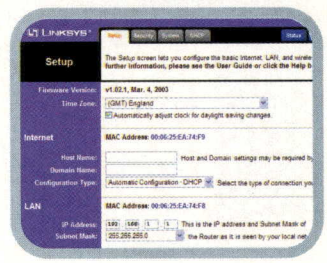
Next, get it talking to your local network. If you're using a router you can configure the wireless network from a PC with a wired connection. For an access point with no internal wired link, you'll need to start with the manufacturer's default settings and change them once you're connected. Instructions vary from vendor to vendor, but in general you'll need to install the router's setup program from the supplied CD on one of your PCs, along with the drivers for its wireless adapter. However, this time you'll need to specify 'Infrastructure' mode for the wireless card, instead of 'Ad Hoc' networking. You should then see the access point displayed in the list of available networks, allowing you to connect to it. Once that's done, you'll be able to reach the router's configuration screens through a regular Web browser (usually via a local address such as **http://192.168.1.1**) where you can change the SSID, enable encryption, configure a firewall or enable more complex filtering rules for all the PCs on your network.

Using a wireless router or access point will give you more control over your local network. By default all your machines are hidden from the outside world, though you can change this. You can also set up port filtering so that incoming data is routed to a particular computer. Lastly, you can easily expand the range of your network by adding additional access points or external aerials. Some enterprising geeks have even built 'cantennas' out of Pringles tins and (empty!) cans of dog food…

Bolting on an antenna to your PCI card can make a huge difference to reception

Feel a bit quirky? Why not turn old tins into a wireless antenna? No? Suit yourself, then

It might look like more advertising for Pringles, but believe it or not, this actually works



Setup your router should involve nothing more than filling in a few details in a wizard

Geek speak

802.11b Aka 'Wi-Fi' or 'Wireless-B'. This is the basic protocol for wireless networking, operating on the 2.4GHz microwave frequency at a peak rate of 11Mbps over a range of 120m, which can be expanded with booster aerials, tin cans or whatever you can manufacture from the contents of your dustbin and a soldering iron.

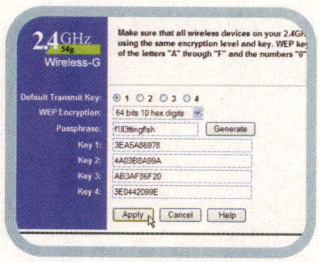
802.11g Aka 'Wireless-G', '54G', 'g-54' or 'AirPlus Xtreme G', depending on the manufacturer. The successor to 802.11b, operating on the same frequency range and providing 54Mbps peak transfer rates over a shorter range. Backwards compatible, meaning that it'll slow down nicely to cope with older hardware.

802.11a The Betamax of wireless protocols: five times as fast as 802.11b, twice as robust as 802.11g, and zero times as compatible as either. Useful if you don't want anyone snooping your network, since most people's hardware won't even know it's there.

SSID The Service Set IDentifier, a 'network name' designed to distinguish between available wireless networks to prevent interference and conflicts. The default SSID is usually the name of a hardware manufacturer; unless you change it, hackers will think you're easy prey.

WEP The Wireless Encryption Protocol, providing basic encryption for wireless networks through passphrase-based authentication.

VPN Virtual Private Networking provides an additional layer of security on home networks, and also lets you create private 'tunnels' so that you can connect from home to office without any precious data leaking out onto the Net.

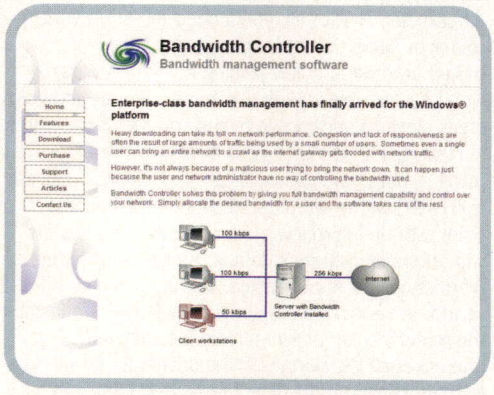


Encrypting your connection is a must, but WEP lets you do it with complex passphrases

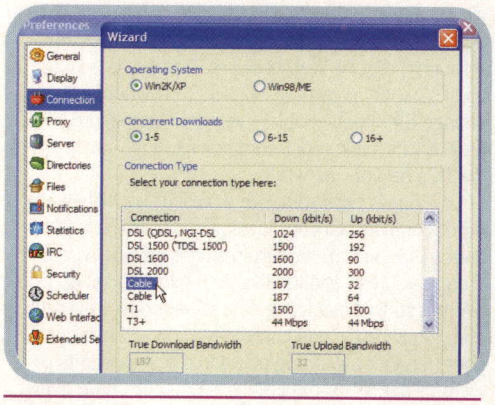
Finally, give some thought to bandwidth sharing: while 802.11g provides sufficient speed for the hungriest pack of surfers, running P2P applications or streaming multimedia with an 802.11b network has the potential to clog things up for other users, especially when uploading data to the Net. Unfortunately, 'bandwidth shaping' isn't built into most consumer hardware or even into Windows – we'll have to wait until the 802.11e 'Quality of Service' protocol arrives next year – so the best solution is either to enable the bandwidth-throttling options provided by most download managers and P2P clients, or, for ad hoc networks, to install a third-party traffic-shaping program such as Bandwidth Controller (**www.bandwidthcontroller.com**).

Securing the airwaves

Once you've got your home wireless network running, it's vital to install security features as soon as possible. While all home networks – and indeed, all broadband connections – require attention to security, wireless networks are doubly vulnerable. It's not simply a matter of protecting yourself from viruses, Trojans or shady characters wishing to gain access to the contents of your hard drive. Something even more valuable is at stake – your precious bandwidth. The ability to latch onto (and leech from) unprotected wireless broadband gives hackers new scope to cause havoc while covering their tracks. Your own PCs may remain untouched, even as a wily cracker with a laptop hides out around the corner trying to break into remote sites using your network connection. Once the damage has been done, the only evidence will point back to your IP address. And even if nothing bad comes out of unauthorised access, it's likely to alert your ISP to a breach of terms and conditions, which could land you in hot water.



If throttling and the like scares you, why not install a bandwidth controller, which will do the job perfectly for you?



If you're running a load of PCs on the same network, it's an idea to throttle the bandwidth for at least one of them

So, while many generous folks have made their home wireless networks open to wandering geeks, we'd recommend that you lock down your bandwidth. Fortunately, the 802.11 standard provides protection through WEP (Wireless Encryption Protocol), which forces users to authenticate themselves before they can connect to an ad hoc network or access point. To set up WEP, go back to the Network Properties dialog for your wireless adapter, or open the browser-based configuration screen for your router, and enable the 'Wireless Network Key' facility. You'll be asked to choose the length of the key – longer is better, but make sure all your hardware supports the particular key length – and enter a passphrase. Choose something that's memorable but not easily guessed, and use numbers and punctuation marks to make it harder to guess. You'll need to do this with every wireless-enabled machine on the network.

Once your bandwidth is secure, make sure your machines are protected. As with all connections, whether networked or not, a firewall and anti-virus shield shouldn't be considered optional extras. Using a firewall may force you to fiddle with your network settings so that certain services work correctly, such as P2P clients, streaming players and instant messengers, but it's a worthwhile inconvenience. XP's built-in Internet Connection Firewall is useful for basic protection, but it doesn't really offer sufficient versatility for most home users. Instead, download or buy a third-party firewall, such as Symantec's Norton Internet Security, Tiny Personal Firewall, or ZoneAlarm. And since the free, basic version of ZoneAlarm (**www.zonelabs.com**) can be integrated into many routers, there's no excuse not to install it on a system-wide basis.

A final consideration: many ISPs store the serial numbers of users' network cards (known as 'MAC addresses') on their customer database, and won't let more than a set number of devices connect through a broadband modem. If you have this problem, use your router's 'MAC Address Cloning' facility to make it look as if you're connecting directly from an existing network card, and you shouldn't have any trouble keeping your network running at top speed! ■

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Host Europe

Step 1: Select Operating System

Cobalt RaQ

from £74.99 per month
The original "Web-in-a-box" solution.

RedHat Linux

from £99.99 per month
RedHat Linux is the industry standard for web hosting.

Microsoft Windows

from £199.99 per month
Microsoft Windows, the choice of small and large businesses alike.

Sun Solaris

from £199.99 per month
The market leader for reliability and performance.

Co-location

from £99.99 per month
Your server's safe in our Data Centre.

Step 2: Select Specification

RaQ 128
128 MB/20GB/**5 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 256
256 MB/20.4GB/**20 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 512
512 MB/30GB/**30 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 550 256
256MB/40GB/**20 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 550 512
512MB/2x80GB/**30 GB** Data Transfer

Entry
Intel Celeron 1Ghz/128MB/40GB/
10 GB Data Transfer

Professional
PIII 1.13Ghz/256MB/60GB/
20 GB Data Transfer

Ultra
PIII 1.266Ghz/512MB/80GB/
30 GB Data Transfer

Ultra II
2xPIII 1.4Ghz/512MB/2x18GB SCSI Hard Disks running RAID 1/
35 GB Data Transfer

Enterprise
2xAMD Athlon 2Ghz/1GB/4x36GB SCSI Hard Disks (RAID 5)/**55 GB** Data Transfer

Enterprise Xeon
2xIntel® Xeon® 2 Ghz/2GB/4x72GB SCSI Hard Disks (RAID5)/**80 GB** Data Transfer

Advance
2xUltra Web Servers/Ultra II Database & Ultra II Mail Server/**100 GB** Data Transfer

Corporate
3xUltra II Web Servers/Ultra Mail Server/ Enterprise Database Server/
250 GB Data Transfer

Corporate Advanced
4xEnterprise Web Servers/Xeon Database Server/Enterprise Mail Server/
400 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V100 128
500MHZ/128MB/40GB EIDE/
20 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V100 1GB
500MHZ/1GB/2x40GB EIDE/
30 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V120 1GB
650MHZ/1GB/36GB Ultra SCSI/
40 GB Data Transfer

Sun Enterprise
2x450MHZ/2GB/2x18GB Ultra SCSI/
100 GB Data Transfer

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Half rack of 20 U's of 19" rack server space/15 100 Mb Switch Ports /15 power sockets/up to 30 IP addresses/
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Full rack of 40 U's of 19" rack server space/23 100 Mb Switch Ports /23 power sockets/up to 60 IP addresses/
70 GB Data Transfer

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only £100 per month

Protect your machine from unwanted visitors. Web based control panel allows you to add rules and deny undesirable visitors.

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Running databases, holding customer information or involved in e-commerce? If your answer is "yes" then order backup now and benefit from free restores if required!

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The ultimate tool for knowing how your server is operating. Pre-empt critical failure and minimise server downtime with messaging via e-mail or SMS.

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(Save £600 per year)

Firewall, Daily Backup and Advanced Systems Monitoring bundled to save over £600 per year! The complete solution to your Web hosting security.

Step 4: Relax with...

FREE AND UNLIMITED Technical Support

Unlike most of our competitors we do not charge for technical support or aftersales service. Available with every Dedicated Servers product, you can call or e-mail our support team on an unlimited basis, 24/7/365.

Service Level Agreement

Standard SLA:
Our Industry leading SLA is your guarantee of a totally reliable service. We'll pay you if it's not! Benefit from 99.9% connectivity, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth and a price freeze-forever!

Advanced SLA:
Specially tailored for Enterprise level services and above, the Advanced SLA is perfect for mission critical sites. Backed by a money back guarantee, benefit from 99.999% connectivity, two hour hardware resolution, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 content on ratio on bandwidth, a price freeze and a personal Account Manager.

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ensim

Free with Linux & Windows Servers

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Our UK Data Centres are designed, owned and managed by us. Situated in London and Nottingham, they benefit from the latest security, backup, power and climate control features available.

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Dedicated Servers are committed to providing you with the highest levels of customer service. Covering all aspects of the customer relationship, it's your assurance of world class service.

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Step 5: Contact Us

t: **0870 333 0877**

e: **sales@dedicated-servers.co.uk**

w: **www.dedicated-servers.co.uk**

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Beyond Google

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN EVEN THE MIGHTY GOOGLE WILL LET YOU DOWN. WE UNEARTH THE LOST ART OF SEARCHING, AND EXPLAIN HOW TO FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT ONLINE

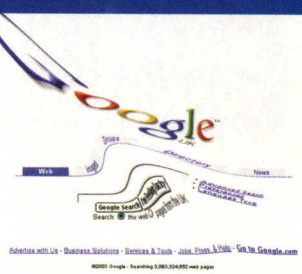
Are you feeling lucky? No, we're not invoking Dirty Harry, but instead referring to the sharpshooter of the Web-search world, and its awesome capacity to hunt down the information you need. You're probably used to us singing the praises of Google – heck, it's won a bundle of awards from *Practical Internet* readers – and it's a classic Internet success story. From its lowly origins as a student project in California, Google has risen to become the undisputed champion among search engines, even while high-profile competitors fell away during the dotcom fallout.

> "We are wrong to think of Google as a pure reference source. It's much closer to a collectively authored page than an encyclopedia"

Not even Google is infallible, though. Its pioneering PageRank formula remains way ahead of the competition when it comes to rooting out dubious data and misleading meta tags. Sites rise to the top of the pile purely because other sites link to them, and if a site receives lots of incoming links, chances are you can trust it. Not always, though. Let's put it bluntly: Google can be a bit of a slave to fashion, favouring the latest and most popular over something hiding quietly in the background. There's already a 'Google Watch' site (**www.google-watch.org**) dedicated to criticising the site's 'anti-democratic' and intrusive practices. And as writer Steven Johnson puts it: "We are wrong to think of Google as a pure reference source. It's closer to a collectively authored op-ed page – filled with bias, polemics and a skewed sense of proportion – than an encyclopedia."

This tendency to reward a site's ubiquity over the quality and accuracy of the content can mean that sometimes Google punches under its weight. This isn't to say that we're deleting it from our bookmarks: our aim isn't to start some sort of 'Google backlash'. But as the browser wars proved, monopolies aren't really healthy when it comes to pushing forward Internet technologies, and Google can't claim an exemption. If it doesn't come up with the goods, there are plenty of other places to look, many of which can be more reliable at supplying pertinent information in specific cases.

Of course, this raises a Catch-22: if there are better ways than Google to find the answer to certain queries, how are you meant to seek them out? Well, it takes a bit of experience and an ear to the ground. Fortunately, we've done much of the hard work on your behalf, and if you follow our suggestions, you'll know exactly where to look.



Directory enquiries

If your instinctive reaction when Google doesn't live up to expectations is to seek out another search engine, it might be worth thinking about different tactics before clicking that mouse button. There are plenty of sites that are better suited to answering specific types of queries than those relying on simple text-based searches, and if your hunt for information fits into those categories, it's sensible to look elsewhere.

For general information on particular topics, it's worth starting with a hierarchical directory rather than a text search. That's partly because Google's results are often skewed towards the interests of those with Web sites, rather than the general public. For example, if you search for 'apple' on Google, you're likely to have to wade through thousands of results dealing with the latest G5 desktop computer before you find a single reference to a Granny Smith. And while you can narrow down searches by adding more specific terms, that can sometimes work haphazardly, missing out on the best sites. Instead, searching by topic means you're more likely to find comprehensive information

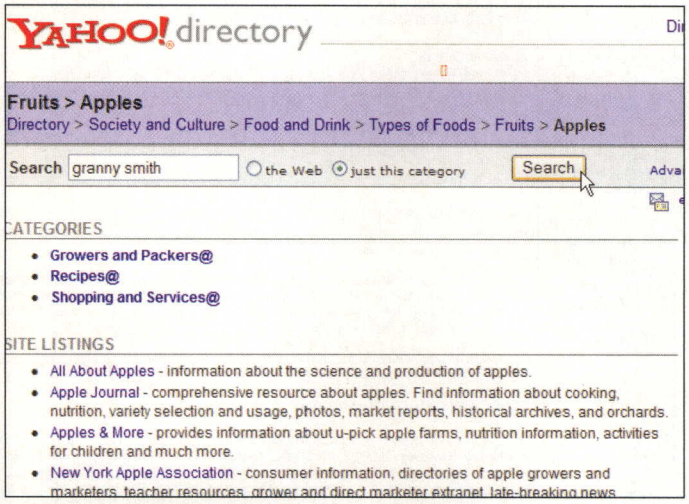
> "There are plenty of sites that are better suited to answering specific types of queries than those relying on text-based searches"

Do you Yahoo?

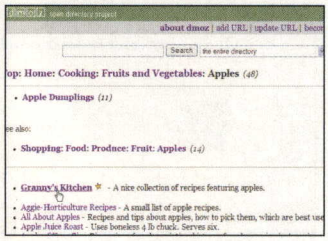
The best-known directory is, of course, Yahoo, the most popular site on the Web, and while the site now offers email, news and the kitchen sink, the topic-based index of sites remains its chief draw. Sites are chosen by human editors to guarantee their usefulness, checked regularly to make sure they're still live, and arranged by category and sub-category with lots of cross-referencing so you don't overlook a particular topic. This helps in two ways: by providing context when you're not sure how to describe the subject that interests you and allowing you to limit your search within a particular category, and by pointing to sites that may not provide an exact match to your query but are likely to offer a better understanding of the field than pages which provide a simple text match. A search for 'bugs', for instance, will point you to sites devoted to insects as well as those dealing with computer glitches.

Opening up

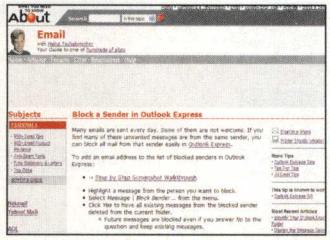
You don't have to limit yourself to Yahoo's editorial perspective, either. The people behind the Open Directory Project (**www.dmoz.org**) certainly didn't. They created the site as an 'open source' alternative to Yahoo when users started complaining about the slow updating process and rumours surrounding fees to receive listings. Rather than relying on in-house staff, Open Directory categories are edited by unpaid volunteers – over 58,000 of them, in fact. This means that the ODP has a valid claim to beat Yahoo at its own game, at least in terms of raw numbers, with 3.8 million sites in nearly half a million categories. And if you need any more persuasion, the ODP is sufficiently useful for Google to use its data in the 'Google Directory' (**directory.google.com**), cross-linked to the other search facilities on the site. There's also the WWW Virtual Library (**vlib.org**), which dates back to the earliest days of the Web, and concentrates on indexing the most reliable reference sources according to subject, rather than attempting to gather every related site into its directory.


YAHOO! directory
Fruits > Apples
Directory > Society and Culture > Food and Drink > Types of Foods > Fruits > Apples
Search granny smith
the Web
just this category
Search
CATEGORIES
Growers and Packers@
Recipes@
Shopping and Services@
SITE LISTINGS
All About Apples - information about the science and production of apples.
Apple Journal - comprehensive resource about apples. Find information about cooking, nutrition, variety selection and usage, photos, market reports, historical archives, and orchards.
Apples & More - provides information about u-pick apple farms, nutrition information, activities for children and much more.
New York Apple Association - consumer information, directories of apple growers and marketers, teacher resources, grower and direct marketer extranet, late-breaking news

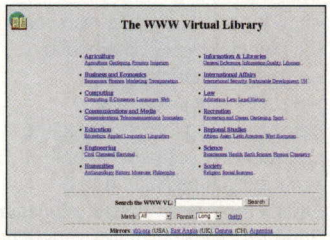
Yahoo puts the Web in order – that's why it's the most popular destination for surfers



With its army of volunteers, the Open Directory is the grassroots alternative to Yahoo



Want the human touch? About.com has a guide for hundreds of online topics



The old lady of Web searching, the Virtual Library provides links to the best reference sites

Google's directory provides a reliable means of browsing for particular subjects online

Geek speak for searchers

Boolean notation
A mathematical system adapted by search engines to allow users to include and exclude particular terms using AND, OR and NOT.

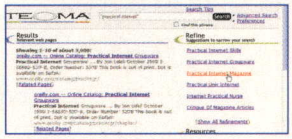
Cache
A copy of a page stored on a third-party Web server, used by search engines for indexing and to provide access to pages when the original site is inaccessible.

PageRank
Google's (controversial) method of evaluating sites based upon the number of inbound links that a page receives.

RSS feed
A text-based way of sharing Web content such as headlines, summaries and even complete pages with other sites and desktop readers

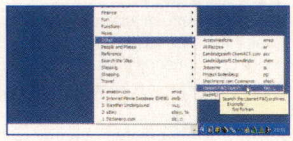
Spider
A program that 'crawls' the Web, following links to check that sites are still alive and indexing page content on a regular basis.

Top five search tools

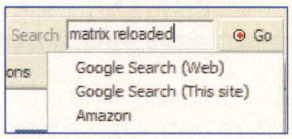


Teoma Toolbar
(sp.ask.com/docs/teoma/toolbar/)
The Google toolbar (**toolbar.google.com**) is ubiquitous, but other search engines offer various browser add-ons. Teoma's provides direct searches, highlights search terms and performs dictionary lookups. You can select terms and right-click a page to start a search.

Copernic Agent
(www.copernic.com
Want the power of all the major search engines combined in a single desktop tool? Copernic is for you, then. It allows you to search by an array of categories, collate results from dozens of sources, bookmark searches you use most and preview results before you browse.



Dave's Quick Search Deskbar
(notesbydave.com/toolbar/)
This free download puts a search box on your Windows taskbar, allowing you to search all manner of sites without launching a browser window. It hooks up to a calculator, currency convertor and foreign language translator.



Nutshell
(www.torrez.org/projects/nutshell/)
Andre Torrez's simple IE add-on provides instant access to some of the Web's biggest hitters: Google, Amazon, IMDB, Dictionary.com and Daypop. It might not be as feature-packed as Google's toolbar, but is equally efficient and doesn't hog your browser window.

Mycroft for Mozilla
(mycroft.mozdev.org)
Mycroft is an attempt to bring the powerful searching facilities of MacOS's Sherlock to the Netscape and Mozilla browsers. Built upon an open plugin-based interface and using the Mozilla sidebar, it covers dozens of resources and can expand as much as you want.

> "You'll find an assortment of encyclopedias online, ranging from old favourites to new, Web-based projects"

Reference library

Looking beyond simple directories, **About.com** offers another valuable resource for those seeking out broad-based information on particular topics. Again human-edited, it differs from Yahoo and the ODP by offering a large amount of original content, usually in the form of brief 'how-to' guides, alongside a selection of useful links to provide further background. While About.com's pages are weighed down with far more 'sponsored' links than simple directories, there's no compulsion to follow them; the articles and 'guide picks' are still well worth bookmarking.

An encyclopedia on your desktop

For detailed information from reliable sources, look no further than a handful of sites that, combined, make up a virtual reference library. While you'll have to pay for access to the Encyclopaedia Britannica or Oxford English Dictionary, those with less esoteric tastes will find lots of topnotch material. You'll find a brief directory of reference sources at **www.reference.com**, but don't limit yourself to the sites it lists. If it's definitions you're after, try either **Dictionary.com** or the Merriam-Webster site (**www.m-w.com**). Both are American sites, so be aware of potential variant spellings, but they also include a thesaurus, crossword helper and foreign language translations, and in the case of Merriam-Webster, a world atlas (**www.mw.com/maps/moremapsnyt.html**).

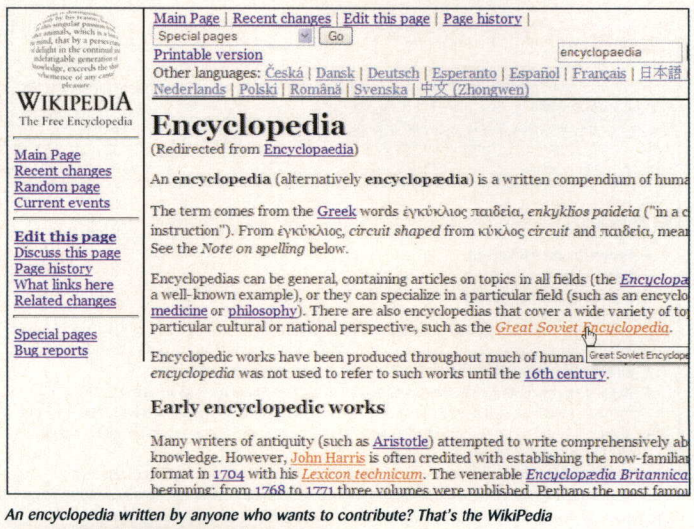
You'll find an assortment of encyclopedias online, ranging from old favourites to new, Web-based projects. There's a useful selection from Microsoft's Encarta encyclopedia at **encarta.msn.com**, the complete text of the public-domain 1911 Britannica at **www.1911encyclopedia.com**, and complete access to the Columbia Encyclopedia at both **www.encyclopedia.com** and **www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia.html**. You'll find quotations, potted histories and literature indexed at Project Bartleby (**www.bartleby.com**) and a huge range of classic books digitised at Project Gutenberg (**www.gutenberg.net**) and Bibliomania (**www.bibliomania.com**). Last but not least, the WikiPedia (**www.wikipedia.org**) is an adventurous Web-based project which is free not just to browse, but also to edit. While this means it doesn't carry the cachet of a print encyclopedia, its standards of accuracy remain pretty high thanks to its volunteer editors and fact-checkers.

As with all sources with roots in recently published material, you have to enjoy free access while it lasts: sadly, the collection at Xrefer (**www.xrefer.co.uk**) went offline in June with the launch of a subscription service available to libraries and other institutions. You can still test out the indexed content of 150 reference books through a 30-day free trial, but Web users will miss the free, open access it used to offer.

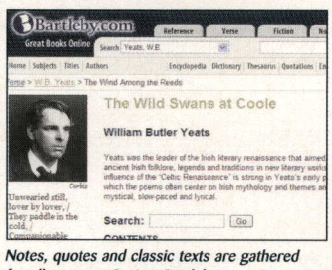
Group dynamics

One of the disadvantages of topic-based directories is that there's an inevitable time-lag as sites are discovered (or submitted), then assessed by editors and included in the hierarchy. There's a similar problem with reference sites: copyright protection often restricts the material that can be reproduced, while the topics discussed tend towards the mainstream.

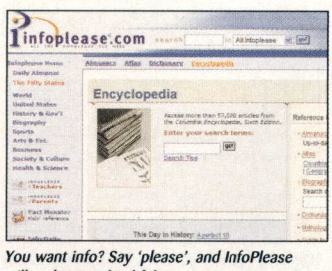
For more timely, obscure or specific queries, you're better off looking at sources that are unique to the Net and bring together both the collective intelligence and collaborative spirit of the online community. We're talking about newsgroups, mailing lists and online message boards, and while many are overlooked because they escape the attention of Google's spiders, they're a great source of up-to-the-minute information, problem-solving tips and other advice.


Main Page | Recent changes | Edit this page | Page history |
Special pages
Go
Printable version
encyclopaedia
Other languages: Česká | Dansk | Deutsch | Esperanto | Español | Français | 日本語
Nederlands | Polski | Română | Svenska | 中文 (Zhongwen)
WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia
Main Page
Recent changes
Random page
Current events
Edit this page
Discuss this page
Page history
What links here
Related changes
Special pages
Bug reports
Encyclopedia
(Redirected from Encyclopaedia)
An encyclopedia (alternatively encyclopædia) is a written compendium of huma
The term comes from the Greek words ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, enkyklios paideia ("in a c
instruction"). From ἐγκύκλιος, circuit shaped from κύκλος circuit and παιδεία, mea
See the Note on spelling below.
Encyclopedias can be general, containing articles on topics in all fields (the Encyclopa
a well-known example), or they can specialize in a particular field (such as an encyclo
medicine or philosophy). There are also encyclopedias that cover a wide variety of to
particular cultural or national perspective, such as the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.
Great Soviet Encyclope
Encyclopedic works have been produced throughout much of human
encyclopedia was not used to refer to such works until the 16th century.
Early encyclopedic works
Many writers of antiquity (such as Aristotle) attempted to write comprehensively ab
knowledge. However, John Harris is often credited with establishing the now-familia
format in 1704 with his Lexicon technicum. The venerable Encyclopædia Britannica
beginning: from 1768 to 1771 three volumes were published. Perhaps the most famou

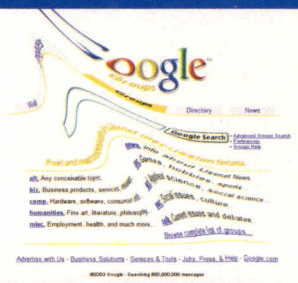
An encyclopedia written by anyone who wants to contribute? That's the WikiPedia



Notes, quotes and classic texts are gathered for all to see at Project Bartleby



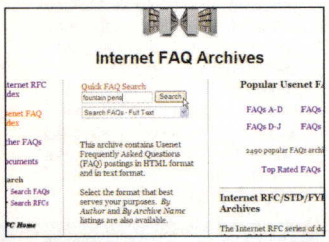
You want info? Say 'please', and InfoPlease will make you thankful...



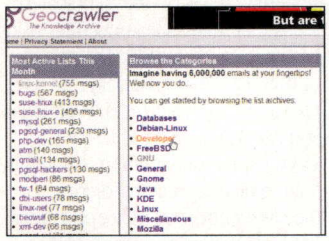
FAQ lists

When delving into the world of group discussions, the best place to start is the FAQ, the Frequently Asked Questions list which most newsgroups and Web-based discussion boards provide to avoid being overwhelmed by 'newbies' asking the same basic things. You'll find a searchable collection of these documents at **www.faqs.org**, and they're an ideal way to get up to speed on a particular subject.

If you've looked at an FAQ and still have specific questions, it's time to turn to the groups themselves. In the past you needed to trawl through messages with a newsreader and hope that anything relevant hadn't 'expired' from the servers. Nowadays you'll find comprehensive, searchable indexes on the Web. The biggest and best is Google Groups (**groups.google.com**) – and yes, while we're meant to be talking about alternatives to Google, it's worth saying that the 'Groups' tab is usually overlooked by most users in favour of the Web search. This is a pity. Its Usenet archives extend back to the pre-Web Eighties, are updated on a daily basis and are easily searchable. If you have a specific question, particularly on technical matters, start here. Chances are other people have asked about the same problem and received answers. And if not, you can always post your own question and hope that someone can help.


Internet FAQ Archives
Popular Usenet F
Quick FAQ Search
Search FAQs - Full Text
FAQs A-D
FAQs D-J
2490 popular FAQs archi
Top Rated FAQs
This archive contains Usenet Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) postings in HTML format and in text format.
Select the format that best serves your purposes. By Author and By Archive Name listings are also available.
Internet RFC/STD/FYI Archives
The Internet RFC series of d

*Sometimes all you need is an FAQ. **Faqs.org** is the place to look*



Some geeky lists are gathered together at Geocrawler mailing lists

News of the world

If you're interested in following newsgroups the 'traditional' way but are a little intimidated, take a look at CyberFiber (**www.cyberfiber.com**). It's the Yahoo of newsgroups – a directory-based index which provides a neatly browseable front-end to the arcane here-is-a-newsgroup naming scheme. You'll need a newsreader or a news-friendly browser such as Mozilla to access the groups, but it takes away a lot of the guesswork.

For access to the whole spectrum of newsgroups, including the binary groups (and their often dubious content) you'll need to pay up front. Sites such as Newsguy (**www.newsguy.com**) and Easynews (**www.easynews.com**) offer subscriptions at reasonable rates, with both browser- and newsreader-based access.

> "Beyond Usenet there's a vast and diverse selection of Web-based discussion groups hosted by providers such as Yahoo and AOL"

Beyond Usenet, there's also a vast and diverse selection of Web-based discussion groups hosted by providers such as Yahoo (**uk.groups.yahoo.com**) and AOL (**groups.aol.co.uk**). These groups are often overlooked because there's no centralised search facility, but this is offset by the fact that the main hosts for these groups offer searches on their own sites. One disadvantage is that you'll normally need to join a group before you can search or browse through messages, and in order to do so you'll need a Yahoo or AOL/AIM username. However, once that's done, you'll have a further treasure-trove of information to draw upon when the need arises.

Here's the science bit...

How come Google got so popular so quickly? In essence, because it ranks sites according to the collective opinion of those who actually use the Web. Like other search engines, Google uses a program known as a 'bot' or 'spider' to keep track of the millions of sites, following links to make sure they still work, checking for updates, then storing an index of their content on a huge networked database at the company's HQ.

Here's the clever part, though: while earlier search engines treated all sites as basically equal, Google rewards pages according to the sites that link to them, counting those links as 'votes' in their favour. (After all, why link to a page if it's of no use to you?) What's more, the higher the PageRank of the sites linking to you, the more their popularity will rub off on you. That can have a downside. People are often accused of 'trolling for links' – doing all they can to receive those precious votes of confidence to move them up the rankings. And this online beauty contest is the chief culprit on those occasions when Google fails you.

Of course, the people behind Google like to claim that it's all done by pigeons. However, the fact that they chose to reveal their secret on April 1st makes us a little sceptical!

Mailing lists

Finally, it's worth seeking inspiration from your inbox. Mailing lists cover many topics, and often you'll be able to access their archives. While a few lists are run through centralised hosts like Topica (**www.topica.com**), and others are archived on sites like GeoCrawler (**www.geocrawler.com**), you'll have to dig around to find the majority of archives. If these don't help, why not sign up to a group that matches your interest? The Net is powered by people, so trust the community to come up trumps.

When Google met the bloggers

We've talked about how Google can sometimes treat a site's reputation as a direct index of the quality of its content. In most cases, the two go together: if a page or a site is updated regularly, and receives a lot of inbound links, the chances are that it's good enough to trust. But that's not always true. Take eBay – even when buying from someone with a spotless reputation, there's a slim chance of getting ripped off.

In recent months there's been a debate raging over whether Google gives too much priority to Web logs. This is because 'blogs' come especially high on the PageRank scoring charts, as they are frequently updated and rely upon lots of inbound and outbound links, known in the community as 'blogrolls', to build traffic between sites.

This controversy was heightened at the start of the year, when **Blogger.com** was acquired by Google, and the in-built favouritism towards Web logs was certainly in evidence during the war in Iraq. That's because popular 'warblogs' such as **InstaPundit.com** started appearing in the top ranks of search queries, which in turn helped reinforce their status at the top of the pile.

Journalists Sandy Starr and Andrew Orlowski have suggested that Google might consider either 'handicapping' Web logs, or creating a separate site dedicated solely to blog entries. This raised huge amounts of fuss among popular bloggers reluctant to sacrifice their high PageRank 'karma'.

And the problem hasn't gone away. We'll have to wait and see how Google deals with the explosion in Web-based punditry, and whether it continues to raise the hackles of those who complain of the 'Google effect', and its influence on the way we navigate the Web.

Researching the search engines

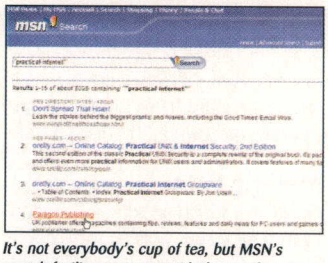
We've tried to point you beyond the world of search engines, rather than survey the direct competition to Google. That's because it's important to develop your expertise, and in many cases you'll get better results in quicker time by changing your line of attack. That said, search engine technology continues to develop at an astonishing pace, and there are a host of rivals looking to take the crown. Just as Google supplanted the competition in the late Nineties, there's a fair chance that a newly minted search site will take its place in years to come. Brand loyalty doesn't matter that much on the Web – if Google does the job most of the time, while competing sites work better in other cases, no-one loses out!

Start your engines

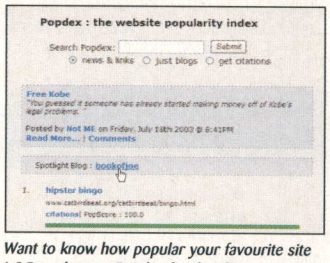
Among the most prominent contenders, Teoma (**www.teoma.com**) has made the most headlines in recent months by concentrating on what it calls 'subject-specific popularity' to bring what it considers the most authoritative links to the top of the pile. It attempts to analyse online communities in order to translate simple popularity into a measure of authority. That's to say, it doesn't just measure how many people link to a site, but also who those people are in terms of their interests.

Teoma also provides useful auxiliary info, such as suggestions for refining a search and a list of 'expert resources' on the subject of the query. By contrast, AllTheWeb (**www.alltheWeb.com**) takes a more minimalistic approach, emphasising speed and comprehensiveness: alongside Web, news and pictures, it also offers dedicated searches for audio and video files as well as material accessible by FTP. You pay a price for speed, though – while AllTheWeb recognises 'clusters' of related sites, its accuracy doesn't match up to either Google or Teoma, unless you dive into the 'Advanced Search' options.

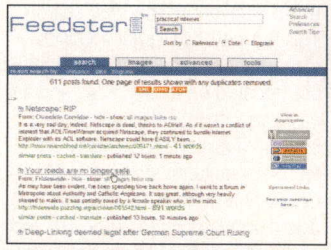
Don't overlook the old favourites either: AltaVista (**www.altavista.com**) and Lycos (**www.lycos.com**) suffered badly in the late Nineties, but they do have some strong points, such as image-based searches. And we'd be silly to forget the Redmond behemoth: MSN Search (**search.msn.com**) may be a little Microsoft-centric, but as a result of constant innovation it's been ranked highly by Search Engine Watch (**www.searchenginewatch.com**) for its ability to combine the best features of both text-based and directory-based searches.



It's not everybody's cup of tea, but MSN's search facility comes up with the goods



Want to know how popular your favourite site is? Pop along to Popdex for the skinny



*Feedster (**www.feedster.com**) is one of many RSS search engines currently helping punters*

> "Search engine technology continues to develop at an astonishing pace and there are a host of rivals looking to take the crown"

Feed me

One of the newest trends in Web searching relies on the 'syndicated' feeds that many sites now offer using protocols such as RSS. The growth of RSS has been especially prominent in two groups: Web logs and news sites. And as RSS 'aggregators' update more frequently than traditional search engines, they're a good way of keeping track of breaking stories or the latest chatter in the blogging community.

The most useful of these is Feedster (**www.feedster.com**) which offers a text-based search of a vast number of constantly updated feeds. You'll also find a number of 'diffusion indexes' such as Daypop (**www.daypop.com**) and Blogdex (**www.blogdex.net**), which keep track of the most commonly referenced links and stories, highlighting trends and 'emergent' ideas as they spread around the Web. Similarly, Popdex (**www.popdex.com**) measures the popularity of recently linked sites in a similar manner to Google's PageRank, while Technorati (**www.technorati.com**) provides both a subject-driven search and a URL-based survey of the 'freshness' and 'authority' of a particular Web log, judged by recent updates and inbound links.

Think of these as the other side of the coin to reference sites. They may not provide comprehensive or even entirely accurate info, but they're great at helping you keep your finger on the pulse of the Web. ■

Desperately seeking...

So, I'm watching the box (some people have a life beyond the PC – really!) and there's this ad for a Renault car, and the song being played in the background is now buzzing in my head. Except it's all in French, and I've no idea who's singing it. So, off to Google, where I enter 'music renault commercial', and get… nothing useful. The top-ranked searches all point to older commercials. Grr! I bookmark one link that might be useful, and start looking elsewhere.

What next? Let's try the newsgroups. I go back to my Google window and click on 'Groups'. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. But I do find a couple of newsgroups that might fit the bill, so post a message to **alt.music.lyrics** and **rec.music.misc**, and hope that someone gets back to me with the juicy details.

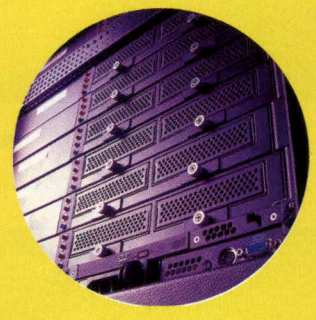
Finally, I try Teoma, my search engine last resort, and 'renault music commercial' turns up just a few links, but top of the list is a doozy: **www.whatsthattune.co.uk**, with a message board dedicated to just this kind of query. And sure enough, a kind soul has already answered the question for someone else. Had I stuck with Google, I'd never have known it was there. And so off I rush to get Brigitte Bardot's '*Moi, Je Joue*'. But not a Renault. The power of advertising, eh?

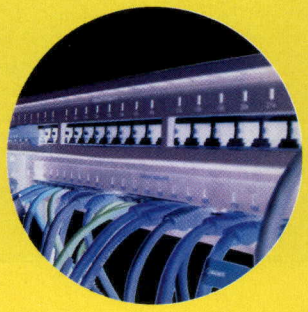
Advanced searching techniques

A good tip with all search engines is to put specific phrases in quotation marks, especially if they contain common words. The quality of your results will increase drastically, even with Google. Try searching for the band "The The", with and without those vital inverted commas, and you'll see exactly what we mean.

If you're looking beyond Google, you need to fine-tune your searches with Boolean. That means using AND, OR and NOT to include and exclude terms. 'Hereford AND cow' will bring up cattle-centric sites; 'Hereford NOT cow' will make life easier for tourists, and 'Hereford OR cow' will supply links on bovine interests as well as Hereford sites.

WEB TAPESTRY





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40 Top Windows XP Tips

DARREN LOCK UNEARTHS THE SECRETS OF THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE OPERATING SYSTEM, HELPING YOU TO TAKE YOUR NET EXPERIENCE TO THE MAX

In October, Windows XP celebrates its second birthday and has already established itself as the most popular and, more importantly, stable Operating System published by Bill Gates and Microsoft. However, the Windows family of software has a long and varied genealogy stretching back nearly twenty years.

Cast your mind back to 1983 when Microsoft announced its new Operating System with a graphical user interface (GUI) aping the style of the Apple machines of the time. Unfortunately, the development of the new software hit a number of setbacks and was delayed, resulting in Windows 1.0 hitting the shelves two years late in November 1985.

The second edition of the Operating System appeared in 1987, with Windows 3.0 making its debut at the beginning of the Nineties. The third incarnation was the most important leap forward for Microsoft with the company completely overhauling the GUI, making it a much more powerful system. Software developers took an interest and this helped Windows 3.0 shift 10 million units and establish the Microsoft brand.

Two years later, the product was further refined with Windows 3.1 and Windows for Workgroups 3.11 (which added networking support and a 256-colour graphics driver) but it wasn't until August 1995 and the launch of Windows 95 that there were any real developments. The Operating System had gone 32-bit and began to look like the OS we know today. Further enhancements came in Windows 98, and Web browsing became an important feature of the software.

The new millennium saw yet another upgrade in the form of Windows Me (or Millennium edition) which was just a bridging gap between the 1998 version and the all-singing, all-dancing Windows XP Operating System that we all now know and love.

"Wouldn't it be good to shut down Windows XP with a keystroke? Well you can..."

01 Blocking strange pop-up messages

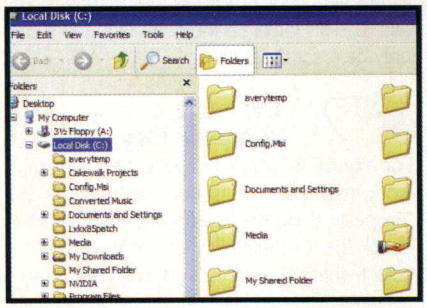
If you get the odd pop-up message when you connect to the Internet, try this tip. Open up the Control Panel and click on 'Administrative Tools'. Now select the 'Services' icon and scroll down to 'Messenger' on the list. Change the startup type to 'Disable'. Don't worry, this doesn't disable MSN Messenger – it's actually a networking component.

02 Shut down WinXP with a keystroke

Wouldn't it be good to shut down Windows XP with a keystroke? Well you can. Just create a new shortcut on the desktop by right-clicking and selecting 'New Shortcut'. Type in 'shutdown.exe -s -t 0' and press 'OK'. Now right-click on the shortcut, go to Properties and where it says 'Shortcut Key', enter the key you want to use.

03 Windows Explorer tip

When using Windows Explorer, you might have noticed that the application no longer defaults to the root drive. To get around this problem, create a shortcut on the desktop and type 'C:\WINDOWS\explorer.scf' into the Location field. Now when you click on the shortcut, Windows Explorer will default to the root drive.

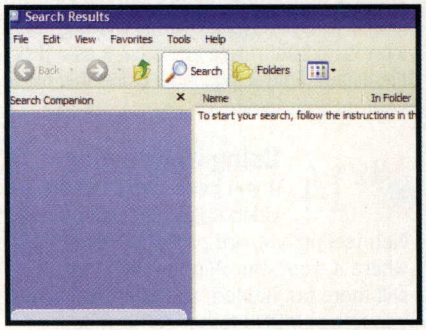


04 Speedy URLs

There's nothing worse than having to type out long Web address. Well, to save your aching fingers try this little timesaver. In Internet Explorer 6 type in your URL address without the 'www' or '.com' and press 'CTRL' + 'ENTER' to finish. This automatically adds the missing 'www' and '.com' for you, but you must have AutoComplete activated in IE6 for this to work (and it only works on .com addresses).

05 Dump the puppy

Are you sick of the 'puppy dock' that appears on the screen every time you do a search in WinXP? To kick this canine to the digital dogs' home, open a new search window, click on 'Change Preferences' and select 'Without animated character'. You can also change the character from here.



06 Internet desktop links

Would you like to be able to click an icon on your desktop and be magically transported to your favourite Web site? Just create a new shortcut by right-clicking on the desktop, and then type the URL into the Location field. Press 'OK' and you have your URL shortcut. You can even assign a keyboard shortcut to this or drag it to the taskbar or Start menu.

07 Internet Explorer speed-up

This is a bit of a classic tip for anyone finding it slow-going with Internet Explorer. Launch IE6 and go to 'Tools', 'Internet Options'. Now click on the 'General' tab and under Home Page select 'Use Blank', before pressing 'OK'. This will make IE6 start lightning-fast.

08 No Image toolbar

The Image toolbar in IE6 can be pretty irritating and you can disable it in the following way. In Internet Explorer, click 'Tools', 'Internet Options' and then select the 'Advanced' tab. Under the Multimedia section, you will see an option to 'Enable Image Toolbar'. Uncheck this to never see the Image toolbar again.

09 It's all history

This is another classic for Internet Explorer and WinXP. To dump your History settings, click on 'Tools', 'Internet

Keyboard shortcuts

CTRL+C Copy

CTRL+X Cut

CTRL+V Paste

CTRL+Z Undo

DELETE Delete

SHIFT+DELETE Delete selected item permanently without placing the item in the Recycle Bin

CTRL while dragging an item Copy selected item

CTRL+SHIFT while dragging an item Create shortcut to selected item

F2 Rename selected item

CTRL+RIGHT ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the next word

CTRL+LEFT ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the previous word

CTRL+DOWN ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the next paragraph

CTRL+UP ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the previous paragraph

CTRL+SHIFT with any of the arrow keys Highlight a block of text

SHIFT with any of the arrow keys Select more than one item in a window or on the desktop, or select text within a document

CTRL+A Select all

F3 Search for a file or folder

ALT+F4 Close the active item or quit the active program

ALT+ENTER Display the properties of the selected object

ALT+SPACEBAR Open the Shortcut menu for the active window

CTRL+F4 Close the active document in programs that allow you to have multiple documents open simultaneously

ALT+TAB Switch between open items

SPACEBAR Select or clear the active checkbox

F1 Display help

ALT+ESC Cycle through items in the order they were opened

CTRL+SHIFT+TAB Move backward through options

"You can tweak Internet Explorer so that page loading times are cut down drastically"

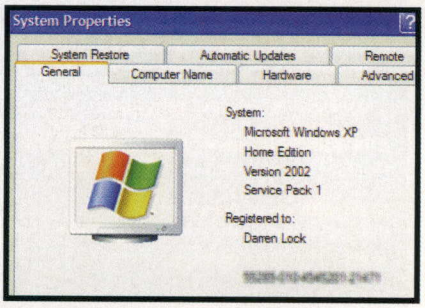
Options' and click on the 'General' tab. Under the History section, set the number of days to '0', meaning that no further URLs will be saved.

10 Scroll wheel shenanigans

Got a mouse with a scroll wheel? Well, hold down the 'CTRL' key when turning the scroll wheel and you can increase/decrease the size of the displayed fonts in Internet Explorer (and some other WinXP apps). If you hold down the 'SHIFT' key while using the scroll wheel you can navigate backwards and forwards through Web pages.

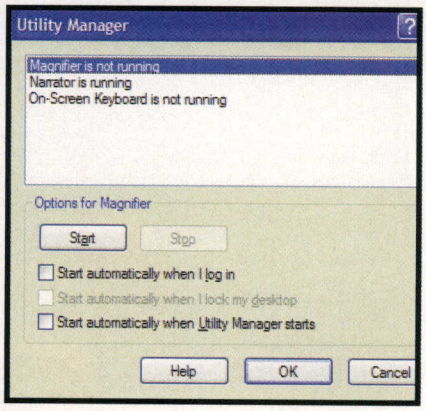
11 System Properties shortcut

If you are always tweaking and poking your system, you might want to get to the System Properties window without going through the rigmarole of the Start menu. One shortcut is to hold down the 'Windows' key and press the 'Pause/Break' key, which opens up System Properties in a trice.



12 Utility Manager

Pressing the 'Windows' key + 'U' opens up the Utility Manager menu. From here you can activate the onscreen magnifier, the narrator program that reads out a screen's text and the onscreen keyboard.

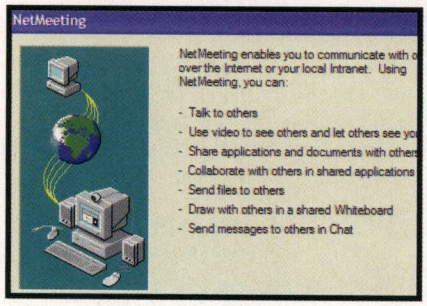


13 Folder icons

If you select the 'Thumbnail' view in Windows Explorer, you will notice that folders can have custom icons. To create your own, just design an icon 200x200 in size and save it as a JPG file called 'Folder.jpg'. Now place this file in your custom folder.

14 Using Netmeeting

If you have ever used the video conferencing software, Netmeeting, you are probably wondering where it went with Windows XP. Well, it's still there but hidden, and Microsoft wants you to use MSN Messenger instead. Anyway, if you want to use Netmeeting again, just click 'Start', 'Run' and type 'conf' before pressing 'OK'.


NetMeeting
NetMeeting enables you to communicate with
over the Internet or your local Intranet. Using
NetMeeting, you can:
- Talk to others
- Use video to see others and let others see yo
- Share applications and documents with others
- Collaborate with others in shared applications
- Send files to others
- Draw with others in a shared Whiteboard
- Send messages to others in Chat

15 Superfast Internet Explorer

You can tweak Internet Explorer so that page loading times are cut down drastically. If you have a large hard drive and don't mind allocating extra space to Internet Explorer, click on 'Tools', 'Internet Options' and then select the 'General 'tab. Hit the 'Settings 'button under Temporary Internet Files and turn the cache settings right up to their maximum.

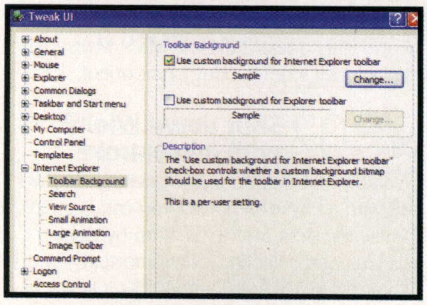
16 Customise Internet Explorer 1

To add your own custom name to the Internet Explorer window at the top of the screen, open up Regedit and search for this registration key: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main.

Now change the value of the 'Window Title' string to whatever you want it to be – or you can leave it blank to wipe out the Internet Explorer title.

17 Customise Internet Explorer 2

To give Internet Explorer that custom look, make sure you have TweakUI installed, and run that application. Select 'Internet Explorer', 'Toolbar Background'. Check the 'Use Custom Background' box and then direct the application to a bitmap graphic (*.bmp). This will be used as a background tile for the IE toolbar.



18 Quick time in Notepad

Notepad is a great little text editor and there's a really quick and easy way of putting the time and date into your text documents. Just open up Notepad and every time you need to make a record of the time and the date, just press the 'F5' key.

19 Lock your PC

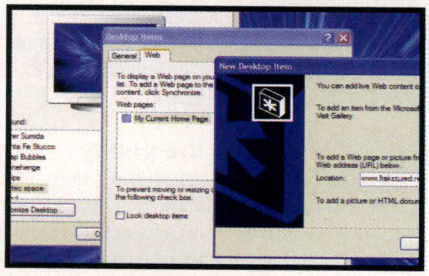
If your PC is publicly accessible and you would like to protect your work from idle hands, you can lock your system with a simple keypress. Just press the 'Windows' key and 'U'. This locks up the computer and it can only be reset by pressing 'CTRL' + 'ALT' + 'DEL'.

20 Even more compatibility

For a quick fix when an application fails to work, right-click on its icon and select 'Properties'. Hit the 'Compatibility' tab and check the 'Compatibility' mode box. Now select which Operating System you want to simulate. You can also adjust the display settings if your applications look garbled.

21 Web page desktop

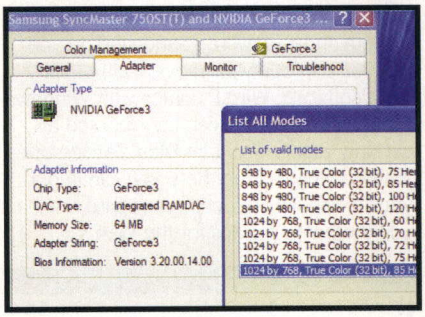
Right-click the desktop and select 'Properties'. Select the 'Desktop' tab from the Display Properties menu and click



'Customize Desktop'. On the Desktop Item menu, select 'Web' and hit the 'New' button. Now type in the URL of your favourite Web site and it will be used as your desktop wallpaper. You can even resize the screen to your requirements.

22 More screen resolutions

WinXP limits you to using only 800x600 screen resolution. However, it's really easy to unlock all the screen resolutions available on your video card. Just right-click the desktop and select 'Properties'. Hit the 'Settings' tab and then 'Advanced' to bring up the Display Properties menu. Now click the 'Adapter' tab and select 'List All Modes' to reveal all your display resolutions.



23 Old to new

If you have just bought a new computer and want to transfer all those important files from one WinXP setup to another, there's a handy application that can help you out. Click on 'Start', 'Program Files', 'Accessories'. 'System Tools' and select the 'Files and Settings Transfer Wizard'. This will guide you through the process of upgrading your setup.

24 Shortcut lock

Create a new shortcut on the desktop, and in the Location field type the following 'rundll32.exe user32.dll,LockWorkStation'. On the next screen, give your shortcut a suitable name and click on 'Finish'. Now with a single click, your PC will be locked from prying eyes.

25 Activate hibernation

If you are using a laptop or like to preserve your setup, go to the Control Panel and select 'Power Options'. On the Power Options Properties menu, select the 'Hibernate' tab and check the 'Hibernate' box. Now when you're on the Shutdown screen, hit the 'SHIFT' key, and the Standby button will magically transform itself into the Hibernate option.

26 Password control

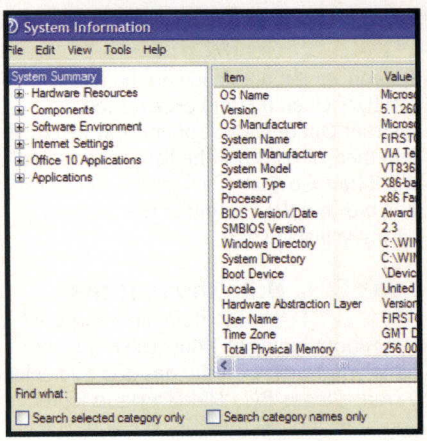
Click on 'Start', 'Run', type in 'control userpasswords2' and press 'Return'. Now you can uncheck the 'Users must enter a username' box to turn off the main WinXP login screen and make WinXP automatically log into the main Administrator account. Checking the box restores the setup.

27 Batch rename

To rename a whole list of files with the same filename and number without separately renaming them, select the files you want to rename from bottom to top and then press 'F2' to rename the first file. Call it something like 'yourfile (1)*'. and press 'Return'. The whole list will be renamed and given a corresponding file number.

28 Knowledge is power

Do you want to know exactly what makes your WinXP system tick? If so, click on 'Start', 'Run', type in 'winmsd' and press 'Return'. This application will list a load of useful information about your system, including detailed reports on the hardware and software installed.



What next for Windows?

The next version of Windows has already been previewed and is known in developer circles as 'Longhorn'. But while the public beta code of this Operating System isn't expected until 2004, with the final released pencilled in for a 2005 release, what can the public expect from the next big Microsoft thing?

The new system will have a radically upgraded user interface (UI) and there will be a number of different versions, just like Windows XP, aimed at business, home and mobile users. Longhorn will feature an 'iterative' (or task-based) interface and the new interface code has already been named 'Aero'. This new user interface scheme will replace the current 'Luna' design, though there are similarities, as both share the same large iconic, almost child-like style.

The graphic interface will use a 3D video hardware to render the many special effects on view. In fact, there will be a big emphasis on the UI looking nice and users can expect to see windows tumbling onto their screens and being warped and alpha-blended on the desktop. So it is going to be real eye candy for all you WinXP enthusiasts. The Operating System is also expected to feature integrated anti-virus and DVD recording software, allowing digital media users to copy video footage from their camcorder straight to a recordable DVD disc.

29 WinXP alarm clock

Use Windows Media Player to create an MP3 playlist (*.m3u) and save it on your hard drive. Now click on 'Start', 'Program Files', 'Accessories', 'System Tools', 'Scheduled Tasks'. Click on 'Add Scheduled Task' and lead the application to the playlist you've created. Now set a time and date and your music will rouse you.

30 Those sticky keys

If you press the 'SHIFT' key five times in succession, you activate a little

"If you want to know about the drives on your PC, there's a little application that can help"

XP plug-ins

TweakUI – This is an essential download from Microsoft if you want to have total control over the WinXP user interface. The application is available to download from **www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp.**

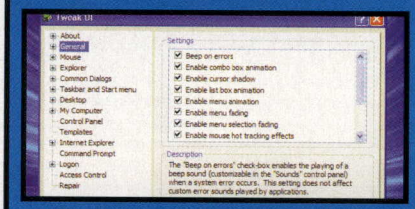
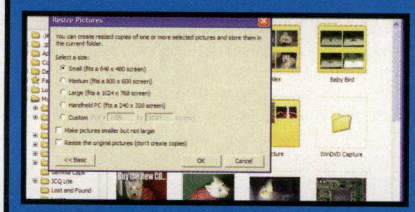
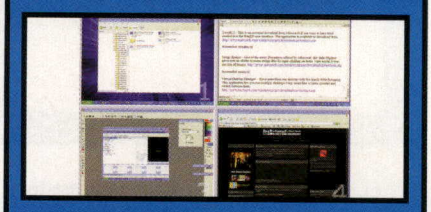


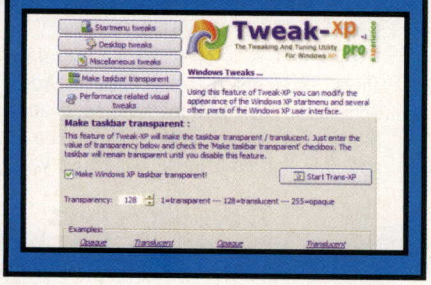
Image Resizer – One of the many PowerToys offered by Microsoft, this little blighter gives you the ability to resize image files by right-clicking on them. Very useful if you use lots of images. **www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp**



Virtual Desktop Manager – Have more than one desktop with this handy little PowerToy. This application lets you run multiple desktops (very much like a Linux system) and switch between them. **www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp**



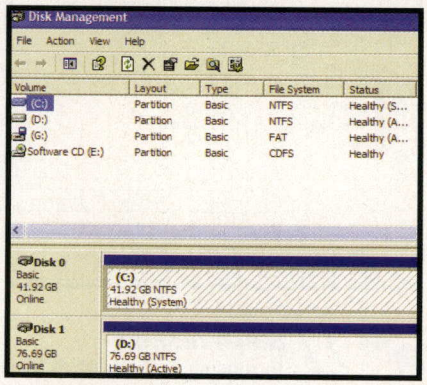
TweakXP – Get down to the nitty gritty with the TweakXP application. This shareware app really lets you look under the bonnet of Microsoft's Operating System. **www.totalidea.de/frameset-tweakxp.htm**



application called Sticky Keys. This useful app allows you to make a number of different adjustments to the way WinXP uses the keyboard and display. For example, you can turn on Filterkeys, which filters out any unwanted keypresses.

31 Disk management

If you want to know all about the drives connected to your PC or want to change the drive letter, there's a little application that can help you do this. Click 'Start', 'Run', type 'diskmgmt.msc' and press 'OK'. This will run the Disk Management module, which will show you the status of the drives.



32 Media Library update

If you've moved your media library around on your hard drive or you just want to start afresh, here's a tip that will help. Close down Windows Media Player and then use Windows Explorer to navigate to: 'c:/Documents and Settings', 'All Users', 'Application Data', 'Microsoft', 'Media Index'. Delete the 'wmplibrary*.db' file, and when you run WMP again start a new search for media files. This will update your library from fresh.

33 Dump the IE6 Go button

Do you want more space on the IE6 taskbar? Open IE6 and click on Tools > Internet Options. Click on the Advanced tab and then scroll down the list until you find the 'Show Go Button' checkbox. Uncheck this box and the Go button will be gone saving valuable space.

34 Hide those icons

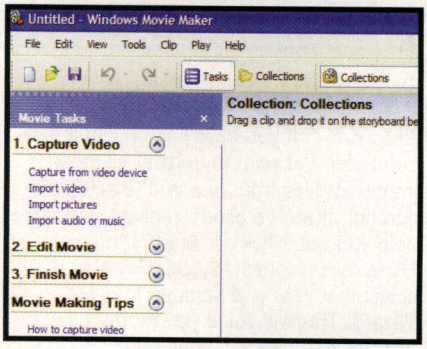
Want to be really secretive? How about hiding all your desktop icons? Simply right-click on the desktop and select 'Arrange Icons By', 'Hide Desktop Icons'. Your desktop will then be nice and clean. To restore the icons, just repeat the process. This is a good tip to remember if you want to play a practical joke on someone!

35 Use IE6 for FTP

If you don't have any FTP software installed on your computer, don't worry. You might be surprised to know that you can use Internet Explorer 6 to upload/download files via FTP. Just open up IE6 and type in 'ftp://username:password @yourserver.com' (remembering to replace username/password/yourserver with your own details, obviously). Now you can drag and drop files onto your Web server in Internet Explorer.

36 Edit your movies

If you have a digital video camera and a Firewire connection on your PC, you can edit your movies without any extra software. WinXP comes with Windows Movie Maker, which can be accessed by clicking 'Start', 'Program Files', 'Accessories', 'Entertainment'. From here you can import your movie files direct to your hard drive and edit them into movies for the Web.



37 Retro media player

Don't like the fancy new WinXP Media Player? Want to use the old media player that came with Win95? If so, click on 'Start', 'Run' and then type 'mplayer2' before pressing 'OK'. The old media player will start, and if you want this to be your default player click on 'View', 'Options', 'Formats' and then select all your music files on the list.

38 Never reactivate Windows

Once you've activated your copy of WinXP, locate the 'wpa.dbl' file in the Windows\System32 folder and make a copy of it. Save it on a floppy disk or CD-R for

safekeeping. If you ever have to reinstall WinXP (or are prompted to activate the software again), just copy the file from the floppy back into the original directory.

39 Create a boot disk

One thing that doesn't come with WinXP is a bootable floppy disk for those times when things go really wrong. To create a bootable floppy, put your disk in the drive and click on the 'My Computer' icon. Now right-click the floppy drive and select 'Format'. Make sure the checkbox for 'Create an MS-DOS startup disk' is checked and press 'OK'.

40 Repair your WinXP

So what do you when it all goes wrong? Well, you could just reinstall your setup and start again from scratch, but this isn't ideal if you have 30Gb of data you want to keep. However, you can repair your installation by inserting your original WinXP CD-ROM and booting from the CD. At the Option screen, press the 'R' to start the repair sequence. ■

Keyboard shortcuts part two

CTRL+ESC Display the Start menu

ALT+Underlined letter in a menu name Display the corresponding menu

F10 Activate the menu bar in the active program

RIGHT ARROW Open the next menu to the right, or open a submenu

LEFT ARROW Open the next menu to the left, or close a submenu

F5 Refresh the active window

BACKSPACE View the folder one level up in My Computer or Windows Explorer

ESC Cancel the current task

SHIFT when you insert a CD into the CD-ROM drive Prevent the CD from automatically playing

ALT+ESC Cycle through items in the order they were opened

F6 Cycle through screen elements in a window or on the desktop

F4 Display the Address bar list in My Computer or Windows Explorer

SHIFT+F10 Display the Shortcut menu for the selected item

WINDOWS+D Show the desktop

WINDOWS+M Minimise all windows

WINDOWS+SHIFT+M Restore minimised windows

WINDOWS+E Open My Computer

WINDOWS+F Search for a file or folder

WINDOWS+D Show the desktop

WINDOWS+F1 Display Wi...

WINDOWS+R Open the Run dialog box

WINDOWS+BREAK Display the System Properties dialog

WINDOWS+U Open the Utility Manager

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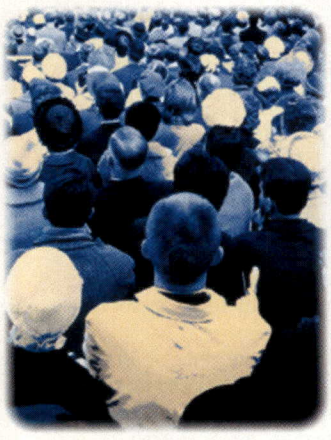

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Email Horror Stories

WHOOPS APOCALYPSE! WE CHRONICLE SOME UNBELIEVABLE EMAIL FAUX PAS THAT FOUND FAME AND NOTORIETY ON THE WEB

<Message:>"Hey baby, I just wanted to let you know that I've managed to get a few days off from my naff job so we can spend some time together while that rubbish old girlfriend of mine is away..."<Ends>
<Send: To all contacts>

Is it really as simple as that to cause untold confusion, heartache, anger and embarrassment by mistake? Well you wouldn't think so, but there are countless tales of horrific email mishaps – some of which you'll read about over the next few pages. It beggars belief that any of the characters in the stories we feature even felt compelled to share their misdemeanours, let alone make the mistake of broadcasting them on the Web.

The funny thing is that most competent people would have great difficulty in accidentally carbon copying a fruity message to an unwitting wife or forwarding a slur on 'demanding fat cats' to their company boss. But here's a tip: look carefully at what you write in your next email, and then think about whether your friends would have a good laugh at seeing you in hot water. As our tawdry tales illustrate, the fallout from even the most innocent of correspondence can be catastrophic for all concerned. Sackings, suspensions, dumpings and damaged reputations are all par for the course, so beware.

Everybody loves a good shock-horror story, and Internet message boards and forums are full of them. This is the tabloid side of the Web – so put your feet up, make yourself comfortable and enjoy our roundup of some of the worst cases...

Avoid email embarrassment

TOP TIPS FOR HOLDING ON TO YOUR JOB, YOUR PARTNER AND YOUR RESPECT

1. Beware of email-filtering software when sending messages from work. Many companies run applications on their mail server that detect foul or abusive language, so any blue language or suggestive comments will get picked up by your system administrator, who could report you to the boss.

2. Before sending an email to anyone, take time to read it back and ask yourself how it would look to a neutral observer if it were to be forwarded by the recipient.

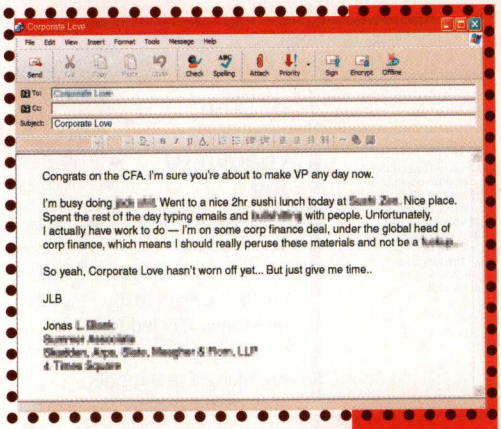
3. The 'Reply to All' function is probably the most dangerous tool within your email client, and can lead to all sorts of embarrassment if you accidentally defame someone on the original list of recipients. Most clients allow you to set 'Reply to All' as default, so it's worth checking your Preferences or Settings menu to ensure that this isn't enabled.

4. If you feel the need to brag about your conquests, slag someone off or just generally stir up trouble, do it over the phone rather than by email, as there's much less chance of the person involved finding out and there will be no corroborative evidence.

5. If it's too late and you've already landed in hot water with your employer over your email misuse, don't feel you're on your own. There are plenty of places you can go for advice if you feel you've been unfairly dismissed or disciplined. One of the most useful places to start is the DTI (**www.dti.gov.uk**), which outlines the grounds on which you can lodge a complaint. If your marriage has suffered as a result of your wayward emailing, try Relate at **www.relate.org.uk**.

Jonas Blank or 'It wasn't me boss, honest'

Office slackers should really think twice about revealing their exploits in emails. Jonas Blank learnt the hard way during his summer internship at top, snappily titled law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. Such nuggets as "I'm doing jack s**t"... "typing emails and bulls**tting people" and "corporate love hasn't worn off yet, but just give me time" aren't the kind of things your bosses like to hear. But they did, when in June 2003 silly Jonas accidentally mailed his remarks to forty people of whom twenty were partners – doh! What quickly followed was an even more pathetic message of apology from Mr. Blank, which sounded so desperate for the safety of his skin that surely he was done for. No, it worked, and reports later confirmed that our ditzy Jonas was still very much employed by the firm and earning an alleged $140,000 a year. Looks like he had the last laugh there then.


Corporate Love

Congrats on the CFA. I'm sure you're about to make VP any day now.

I'm busy doing [illegible]. Went to a nice 2hr sushi lunch today at [illegible]. Nice place. Spent the rest of the day typing emails and [illegible] with people. Unfortunately, I actually have work to do — I'm on some corp finance deal, under the global head of corp finance, which means I should really peruse these materials and not be a [illegible].

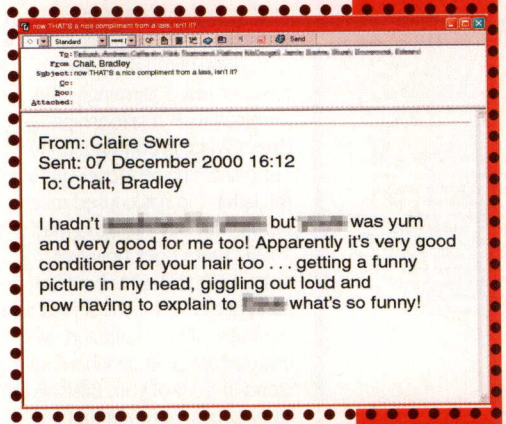
So yeah, Corporate Love hasn't worn off yet... But just give me time..

JLB

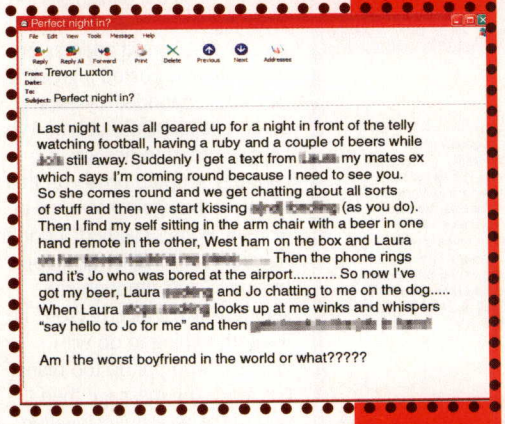
Jonas L. Blank
Summer Associate
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP
4 Times Square

Claire Swire or 'When it comes to email, use your head'

Probably the most infamous case of embarrassing emails concerned two employees of London law firm Norton Rose. In December 2000 a worker by the name of Bradley Chait decided to send colleague Claire Swire a cheeky joke about a sperm bank via the office email. What followed was a text conversation where Swire alluded to a sexual act she had previously performed on Bradley. Buoyed by her remarks of "Yours was yum and good for me too!" the foolish Chait thought it clever to forward the messages to friends. Unfortunately his possibly jealous pals took it upon themselves to circulate the message across the Internet. Initial responses were that the whole thing was a hoax, although it later emerged that a Bradley Chait did in fact exist within the company and despite his denials was reprimanded for breach of contract. Norton Rose later announced the suspension of nine staff involved in the stunt, with a somewhat sheepish Swire proclaiming that "working for Norton Rose sucks more than I". Now that is being left with a bitter taste in your mouth.


From: Claire Swire
Sent: 07 December 2000 16:12
To: Chait, Bradley

I hadn't [illegible] but [illegible] was yum and very good for me too! Apparently it's very good conditioner for your hair too . . . getting a funny picture in my head, giggling out loud and now having to explain to [illegible] what's so funny!


Perfect night in?

From: Trevor Luxton
Subject: Perfect night in?

Last night I was all geared up for a night in front of the telly watching football, having a ruby and a couple of beers while [illegible] still away. Suddenly I get a text from [illegible] my mates ex which says I'm coming round because I need to see you. So she comes round and we get chatting about all sorts of stuff and then we start kissing and [illegible] (as you do). Then I find my self sitting in the arm chair with a beer in one hand remote in the other, West ham on the box and Laura [illegible]. Then the phone rings and it's Jo who was bored at the airport..... So now I've got my beer, Laura [illegible] and Jo chatting to me on the dog..... When Laura [illegible] looks up at me winks and whispers "say hello to Jo for me" and then [illegible]

Am I the worst boyfriend in the world or what?????

Trevor Luxton or 'Hold on love, it's the dog and bone'

Some people never learn. Others take a look at what has been done and then take it to new extremes of lunacy, a la Trevor Luxton. If the Claire Swire incident could teach anyone anything it would be to keep tabs on some of the more salacious aspects of your life, let alone mailing them. But here's Trevor, bragging to his friends about his naughty night in October 2002. His email sets the scene, although we'll spare you the details. Enough to say that Trevor was all set for a night alone with West Ham "on the box" and a curry, or "ruby" as he calls it. Girlfriend Jo was away so Luxton thought nothing of inviting his mate's ex-girlfriend Laura over for a chat. Big mistake, as the inevitable promise of an understanding ear became a spontaneous fumbling. Needless to say his impromptu guest ended up on her knees and in Trevor's lap while he answered a call from a doting Jo. "Am I the worst boyfriend in the world or what!" he proclaimed to his mates, whose circulation of the message landed the group with suspensions from work. Luxton later resigned, but newspaper reports insisted his relationship with Jo, although strained, remained surprisingly intact.

> "Office slackers should really think twice about revealing their exploits in emails"

1: Jonas Blank
2: Claire Swire
3: Trevor Luxton

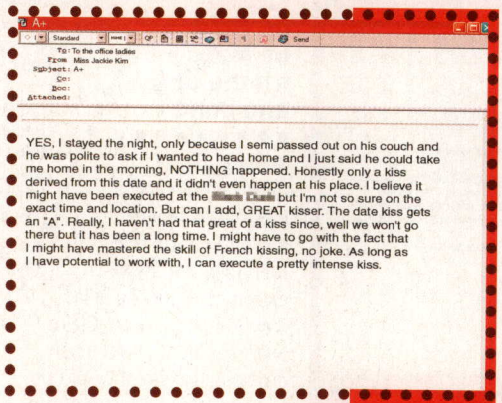
"When someone who's full of themselves falls flat because of their own stupidity, it's a hoot"

Heartwarming e-tales

FOR EVERY EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE DISASTER, THERE'S SOMEONE WHOSE LIFE HAS BEEN TOUCHED IN A SPECIAL WAY BY THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY. WE ROUND UP SOME OF THE MORE TOUCHING TALES TO PROVE THAT EMAIL ISN'T THE TOOL OF SATAN

Jacqueline Kim or 'Kiss and tell... just about the whole world'

Refreshingly, this one's slightly more savoury but no less demeaning for the young lady involved. In June 2002 inboxes far and wide became privy to a Miss Jacqueline Kim and her detailed description of a date. The man in question was some poor fella called Casey O'Brien who most likely was able to read exactly what his date really thought of him. On the whole though, that wasn't too bad and Kim had intriguingly given the guy respectable ratings for appearance etc. Luckily Casey scored an 'A' for his BMW car, his choice of restaurant and his kissing, with his appearance scraping in at a 'B'. This was said to be due to his lengthy hair being "far from a mullet" but "longer than I prefer". The email then went on to meticulously cover all aspects of the experience in excruciating detail, with a distinctly shallow voice of appreciation. It was this notable lack of any substance to her personality and recognisable 'yuppie' sensibilities that landed Jacqueline the flak she later received from readers. When the message was leaked, her office and phone number remained in her signature for all to see, and the ensuing commotion scuppered any chance of romance with Casey.

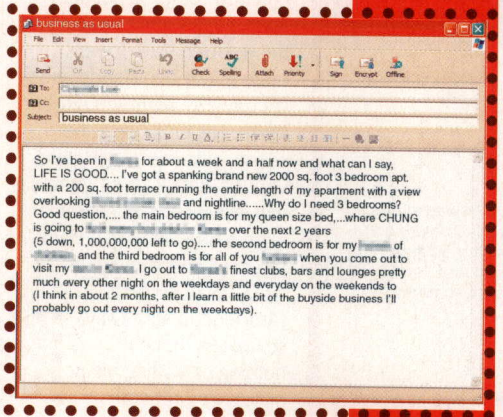

A+

To: To the office ladies
From: Miss Jackie Kim
Subject: A+
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

YES, I stayed the night, only because I semi passed out on his couch and he was polite to ask if I wanted to head home and I just said he could take me home in the morning, NOTHING happened. Honestly only a kiss derived from this date and it didn't even happen at his place. I believe it might have been executed at the [redacted] but I'm not so sure on the exact time and location. But can I add, GREAT kisser. The date kiss gets an "A". Really, I haven't had that great of a kiss since, well we won't go there but it has been a long time. I might have to go with the fact that I might have mastered the skill of French kissing, no joke. As long as I have potential to work with, I can execute a pretty intense kiss.

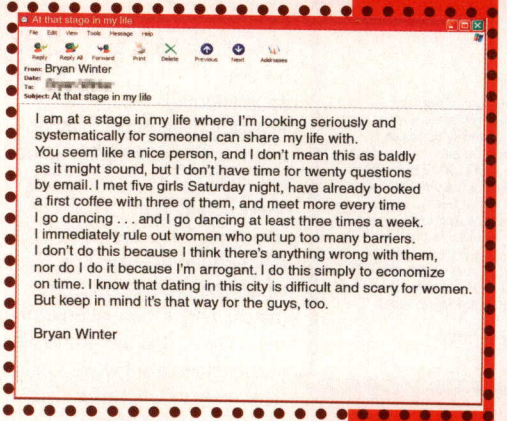
Peter Chung or 'What have you CHUNG, you investment banker!'

Nobody likes a big-head, so when someone who's full of themselves falls flat because of their own stupidity, it's a hoot. Again it's a case of an egotistical bloke who cannot resist sharing his exploits with those friends he thought he could trust. Surprisingly, his shocking claims of a playboy lifestyle while on business in Korea got forwarded and forwarded, until they reached authorities in Wall Street. Peter Chung boasted of countless female conquests in his swanky new apartment, insisting "I know I was a stud in NYC but I pretty much get about, on average, 5-8 phone numbers a week". He talked of driving around in a Porsche and visiting the 'best clubs', but it was his disdainful comments about fellow bankers who "cater to my every whim" that landed him in hot water. The use of four letter expletives and requests for friends to send emergency rations of condoms or "domes" also failed to inspire, leading eventually to the 24-year-old's dismissal. His messages had for some time been bandied about the financial world before disgruntled bosses at the Carlyle equity group got wind.


business as usual

To: [redacted]
Cc:
Subject: business as usual

So I've been in [redacted] for about a week and a half now and what can I say, LIFE IS GOOD.... I've got a spanking brand new 2000 sq. foot 3 bedroom apt. with a 200 sq. foot terrace running the entire length of my apartment with a view overlooking [redacted] and nightline.....Why do I need 3 bedrooms? Good question,.... the main bedroom is for my queen size bed,...where CHUNG is going to [redacted] over the next 2 years (5 down, 1,000,000,000 left to go).... the second bedroom is for my [redacted] of [redacted] and the third bedroom is for all of you [redacted] when you come out to visit my [redacted] I go out to [redacted] finest clubs, bars and lounges pretty much every other night on the weekdays and everyday on the weekends to (I think in about 2 months, after I learn a little bit of the buyside business I'll probably go out every night on the weekdays).


At that stage in my life

From: Bryan Winter
Date: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: At that stage in my life

I am at a stage in my life where I'm looking seriously and systematically for someonel can share my life with.
You seem like a nice person, and I don't mean this as baldly as it might sound, but I don't have time for twenty questions by email. I met five girls Saturday night, have already booked a first coffee with three of them, and meet more every time I go dancing . . . and I go dancing at least three times a week. I immediately rule out women who put up too many barriers. I don't do this because I think there's anything wrong with them, nor do I do it because I'm arrogant. I do this simply to economize on time. I know that dating in this city is difficult and scary for women. But keep in mind it's that way for the guys, too.

Bryan Winter

1: Jacqueline Kim
2: Peter Chung
3: Bryan Winter

Bryan Winter or 'The email chauvinist pig'

The faceless nature of sending emails or SMS text messages has led to some people exploiting it as a mode of communicating 'difficult' things. It may be hard to believe but often the delivery of redundancies or sackings has taken this form, or more alarmingly, the termination of relationships. Bryan Winter's contribution to our hall of shame loosely fits into the latter and has caused much uproar since surfacing in May 1999. There does however, remain some doubt about its authenticity, but it still serves as a reminder of how cold and even nasty people can be when not stood in front of you. Basically, the story goes that Bryan met a woman while out dancing in the Washington DC area. Having received her email address on the night and posted a greeting, the lady responded by asking some questions about him. What later returned to her was a carefully scripted brush-off that subsequently got forwarded in dismay. Winter claimed "I don't have time for twenty questions by email" and although she seemed "like a nice person" he wanted nothing to do with women "who put up too many barriers". The message then upped the ante by insinuating that a man willing to "negotiate by email" failed to exist, but if so, would be far too desperate to offer anything worth having. ■

Burns lad treated by email

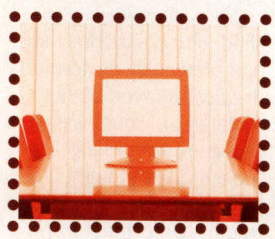
A burns victim's luck changed when doctors in Australia were able to perform treatment on him via email. The lad, who lived in a remote part of Queensland, suffered a two percent full thickness burn on his leg following a motorcycle accident and needed almost five months of treatment and skin grafts. He would have been kept in hospital for longer were it not for the magic of email, as doctors were able to monitor and care for him using a desktop scanner rigged up to the family computer.

Text blunder leads to wedding bells

A couple who hooked up following a raunchy text message sent accidentally are preparing to walk down the aisle. 30-year-old Paul Bishop from Barnsley was gobsmacked when he received a mystery message which simply read: '26, ski instructor, GSOH, 36-26-38ish and brunette.' After exchanging a few messages and getting to know each other a bit better, the pair arranged to meet up and hit it off straight away. Two years later and Mr Bishop has popped the question to Jo Hartley of Leicester, who kindly said "I do".

Suffering sailors saved by SMS

Three sailors who ran into trouble off the South Coast were saved by a mobile phone. The men were sailing off the coast of the Isle of Wight when their boat capsized, leaving them floundering in the water. After failing to get through to the coastguard via 999, one of the men hit upon the idea of texting his father in Southampton, who alerted the coastguard to scramble a helicopter to the scene and winch them to safety.



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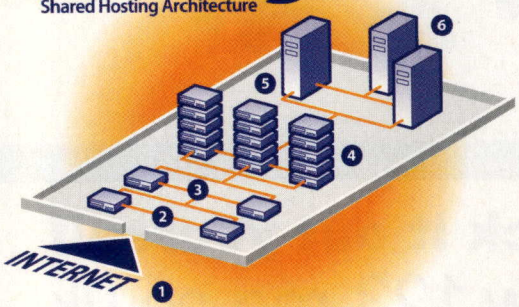

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The 123-reg site builder is a clear market leader in terms of features and functionality, having been developed purely with our customers in mind. Exclusive to 123-reg, this new low-cost service allows anyone to build and maintain a professional looking web site in minutes; no knowledge of programming required!

Includes all the necessary tools required to create and update a web site, such as over 100 designs, templates, an intuitive editor, tables, forms and multimedia capabilities. The product is ideal for people and companies who want to establish an on-line presence but don't want to get immersed in development or high costs.

~~£4.20**~~ per month

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There's no better place to host your site!

123-reg manages its own UK based data centres, with state-of-the-art security and all the backup facilities you would expect from a market leader. Your site will be hosted on a high-end server and be totally under your control via our easy to use control panel. Choose from two great packages that will keep your web sites on-line...all the time!

Regular:
250 MB for £2.99† per month, 1 GB data transfer (bandwidth) per month, CGI/Perl, on-line file manager, 10 POP 3 accounts, Webalizer statistics, Unlimited e-mail forwarding addresses.

Xtra Large:
500 MB for £4.99† per month, 2 GB data transfer (bandwidth) per month, CGI/Perl, on-line file manager, 25 POP 3 accounts, Webalizer statistics, Unlimited e-mail forwarding addresses.

from ~~£2.99†~~ per month

American Express MasterCard VISA Switch Delta Solo

*Plus registrar registration fee, see web site for full details. **Monthly fee must be paid annually.
† Monthly fee, must be paid annually and excludes one-off setup fee of £9.99. All prices exclude VAT. E&OE

Part of the Host Europe Group

TAKE A PEAK INSIDE THE WORLD OF UEFA.COM – SEE PAGE 48

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BUILD STUNNING SITES

Webmaster

■ IN-DEPTH FEATURES ■ STEP-BY-STEP WORKSHOPS ■ HAND-CODING MASTERCLASS

WELCOME...

IT'S AN ACCEPTED fact of life that you have to pay to get the best, and this includes Web design. Programs like Photoshop will set you back at least an arm, but there's often no need to shell out the leg as well. We take it for granted that you need the full gamut of tools to create anything worthwhile, but in the case of Photoshop that is simply not true. In fact, Adobe's pacesetting power tool has everything you need to build your own amazing Web page. That's right, you can set up the graphics, the rollovers and the links all within the Photoshop interface. If you don't believe me, turn to page 54...

Thomas Watson, Editor

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BUILD AN ENTIRE HOME PAGE WITHIN ADOBE'S MASTERFUL GRAPHICS APP – SEE PAGE 54

Also in Webmaster this issue...

We've all got our favourite sites that we visit time and again, but what's the secret formula that makes us want to return? We reveal the tricks behind creating a successful and well-designed site

It's taken a few months, but we're finally ready to put the database functionality we created in previous tutorials to use in the final part of our database-driven site workshop

How we built...
Uefa.com

AH, THE SUMMER FOOTBALL DROUGHT SEEMS A DISTANT MEMORY AS THE THRILL OF EUROPEAN COMPETITION BUILDS UP STEAM. WE SPEAK WITH UEFA.COM'S EDITOR-IN CHIEF ABOUT HOW THE GOVERNING BODY SCORED A WINNER ON THE WEB

When you think about it, Jimmy Greaves was spot-on when he called football a 'funny old game'. How could you possibly describe the heartfelt emotion it inspires in people when ultimately it's 22 blokes booting a bit of leather? It's only those dedicated fans who ardently follow their team's progress through thick and thin who can truly understand. However, the passion for a sport dubbed 'the beautiful game' reaches right across the globe, serving as a universal language from continent to continent. People from different walks of life can be brought together in the exhilaration of ball hitting net, and that surely can't be a bad thing.

Okay, so that might be an incredibly twee way of looking at it, and one possibly not wholly shared by Millwall supporters, but this idea of unity somehow has particular significance for the Internet. If football can be appreciated internationally, it makes it ideal for global access on the Web. Let's face it, perhaps the only place that the population couldn't care less about it is the US, where they're too busy watching padded men collide to watch 'soccer'.

With the European game in particular boasting the cream of domestic action, encompassing England, Spain and Italy, the demand for online coverage is increasing. At the pinnacle of all this is the governing body Uefa who not only administers rules and regulations, but organises some of the biggest tournaments going. The Champions League has established itself as the number one club competition worldwide, showcasing legendary teams like Real Madrid, AC Milan, Bayern Munich and Manchester United, while the Uefa Cup too maintains an illustrious history.

There are international tournaments such as the upcoming Euro 2004 finals to consider, not forgetting various youth championships and the Intertoto Cup, but in truth the organisation goes right down to grass roots level, and that's where Uefa.com earns its colours.

If you don't know your Shakhtar Donetsks from your Crvena Zvezdas, this is certainly the place to start. The site serves as a superb Who's Who of European football, enabling you to catch up with each country's league standings and learn a thing or two about legendary players. Active since August 1998, the site has gradually been integrated into Uefa New Media following audits and restructuring within the organisation. This led to a significant redesign for the beginning of the 2001 season, and since then the site has established itself as a firm favourite with fans. "We feel we are meeting the general expectations of the general football fan," explains Editor-in-Chief David Farrelly when quizzed about the site's purpose. "Uefa administers football and organises competitions. Therefore from the start we had certain considerations to keep in mind, as we are the governing body. Secondly, we are also football fanatics and we used our own experiences of what football followers want to see on the site: features with the key players, live coverage and competitions, for example."

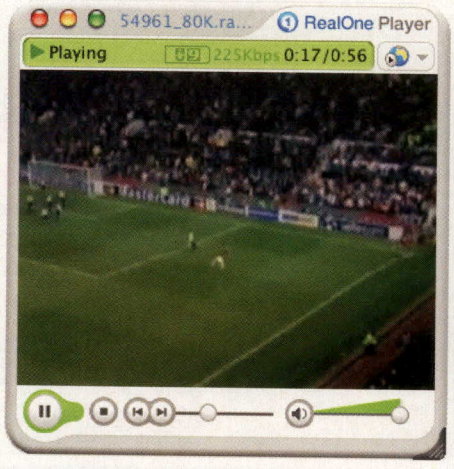
"WE WOULD LIKE TO BE REGARDED AS INNOVATIVE WITH WHAT WE CAN DO ON UEFA.COM" DAVID FARRELLY

Join our club

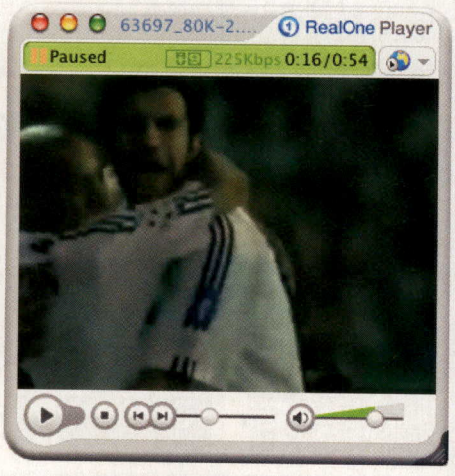
This intuitive knowledge was supplemented by multi-lingual surveys asking users for their expectations, and has contributed immensely to a sense of community. "The medium is there to get users involved in the site," says David. "And for the coming season we will be introducing more community opportunities to allow users to provide their constructive input."

Feedback so far has shown users to be appreciative and positive according to David, with any suggestion of improvements usually centring on favoured designs. However, the Editor does recall a few rants and raves that most frustrated supporters can appreciate: "Normally the complaints are received from fans grumbling about a disciplinary decision that Uefa has imposed on a club or player."

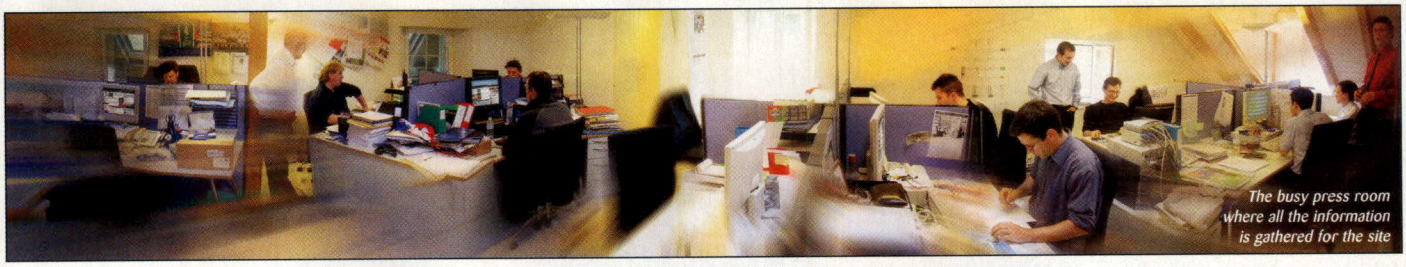
Uefa.com has managed to cram a bewildering amount of information and statistics within well-defined sections. The 'Fanzone' keeps the communal vibe alive with user polls, forum and chat, while the breaking news items keep fans' fingers on the pulse. One of the most striking aspects is the large collection of streaming videos that provide match highlights throughout



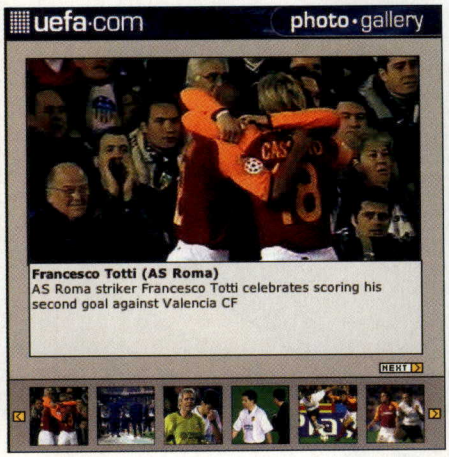
You only need to log on to watch the best football tournament in the world -- with live coverage of the Uefa Champions League



Get up close and personal in those goal celebrations with cameras focused on every aspect of the game



The busy press room where all the information is gathered for the site


uefa.com
photo·gallery
Francesco Totti (AS Roma)
AS Roma striker Francesco Totti celebrates scoring his second goal against Valencia CF
NEXT

See the highlights from a top football match unfold in a special picture gallery dedicated to particular matches

the season. "We have our own multimedia team involved in creating video for the site," enthuses Farrelly. "And that ranges from filming our own material to editing from broadcaster tapes."

Provision of this often exclusive content is not always easy, with Farrelly confessing that the benefit of experience helps the team meet tight deadlines. "The difficult aspect really involves the type of season we have in Uefa competitions where you start with over 200 clubs," he explains. "It's not like the Premiership where you have ten matches per week between August and May."

Making the connection

There are, of course, the additional concerns of supporting users of varying bandwidths and ensuring the fast-paced video runs smoothly. "We have worked with partners at finding the best speeds of connection for users. Over time market forces will probably see more and more people moving to faster connections." This willingness to progress with the times is something the site exhibits in additional 'Match Pass' and WAP features. Here users can subscribe to live match commentaries and programmes, while mobile services give fans draw updates, news and scores on the move. "These are exciting initiatives to have on Uefa.com and we've received positive feedback from people using these services," says David. "More plans are in the pipeline for next season and all will be revealed."

With Uefa New Media responsible for a number of online and digital work streams beyond just updating the Web site, many of these services are developed in-house. This includes editorial, marketing, technical, design, production and even legalities surrounding sponsorships and corporate affiliations. "We are very careful with regards to rights issues that arise from time to time by checking thoroughly with our legal department," confirms David.

Any outsourcing on the technical side is done purely where necessary. "We are fortunate that our partners have all worked with Uefa for a long time and understand the business," says David. This no doubt helps keep things cohesive, along with a streamlined team of staff. "In total, you're probably looking at 50 people being involved, either in-house or outsourced, which was built up over time," he continues.

Some of the difficulties faced during this development period seem to have been attributed to the vast amounts of scheduled content. Web pages not only need to present information within an attractive design, but as Farrelly highlights, allowing users to access that data efficiently is a major concern: "We sought to accommodate the enormous amounts of varying content into a proper structure and to design a navigation where information would appear in a proper way," he explains. "We wanted to drive users to the most important information at any time regardless of where it belongs internally on the site, be it Uefa Champions League or the Uefa European Under-17 Championship."

That may be so, but it raises the question of where the site gets all the information to begin with. David reveals that the journalistic elements operate in a similar way to newspaper publishing, despite deadlines being different and the extra consideration of multimedia content. "We plan certain types of content in advance such as match day coverage, static text, special features or new sections of the site," he confesses. "Then on a day-to-day basis, a team of sub-editors organise and arrange the news. The issue is about finding simple, efficient ways to display information across eight language sites."

This provision of content across multiple dialects brought the team a fair share of headaches. Football may be its own dictionary, but the Swiss-based organisation realises it must successfully support those fans with a foreign tongue. "Personally I think the biggest step we have made since August 2001 has been the delivery of seven languages to Uefa.com," Farrelly cites when asked about his proudest achievements. "This is now up and running and we are benefiting by having users on the site who may never have used Uefa.com before because it was only in English."

In-depth analysis and match reports are covered for all the Uefa Champions League matches so you'll never be without the info

Have a break

When you consider just how much work the team has to contend with, you wonder when there's time to take a break. Although most European seasons begin and end around the same time, with the Uefa tournaments fitted around them, there seems little rest in the modern football calendar. From August to May competition is rife from the early stages to the finals, and although there are some lulls in activity, the advent of transfer windows keeps things bubbling. David Farrelly even expects that next season could prove one of the busiest yet: "We anticipate that traffic will not taper off after the finals, as the Uefa European Under-21 Championship and Uefa Euro 2004 take place."

However, the Editor can still look to the site's future with a fair amount of excitement. He outlines major leaps forward in content provision, including editorial activities and those for design and production. "We would like to be regarded as innovative with what we can do on Uefa.com," he beams. "And given the developments, technologically in particular, if we maintain our position as Europe's football Web site, who knows what the limits could be." ■

Site stats

Uefa
www.uefa.com

- **Who designed it?**
  Uefa New Media
- **Number of people involved?**
  A combined team of around 50
- **Software used?**
  Microsoft and Adobe products only
- **Number of languages?**
  Eight

The art of creating good Web sites

THERE'S MORE TO BUILDING A GOOD WEB SITE THAN SIMPLY UPLOADING A FEW FILES. **CHRIS SCHMIDT** SHOWS YOU HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE...

With a seemingly infinite number of Web sites available covering almost every conceivable subject, and with everyone and their dog claiming to be a Web designer to some degree, the majority of the Net is now full of sites that are badly designed, impractical to use and questionable as to their authority on their chosen subject.

There's a vast array of software available and anyone can create a Web site. But building one worth adding to your browser's Favorites requires skills in various areas – not only in design and coding, but also researching and writing copy that's put together in a logical way which is easy to identify, read and navigate.

The old cliché about content being king has always been particularly relevant to Web sites, but that doesn't mean that design, usability and functionality can be overlooked. A good site manages to blend together a number of these key aspects to form a cohesive whole which allows the visitor to intuitively find and digest information without distracting them from their chain of thought.

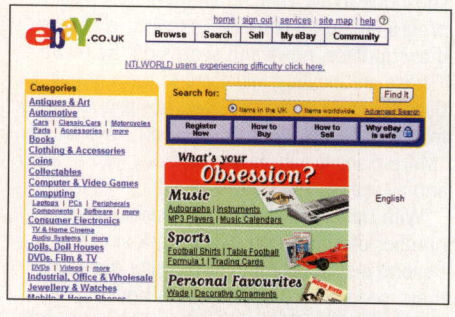
Keep reading, and you'll be surprised to discover that the creation of a good Web site doesn't need to involve much more than a little understanding of the media and its limitations, plus a healthy dose of common sense.

Site concept

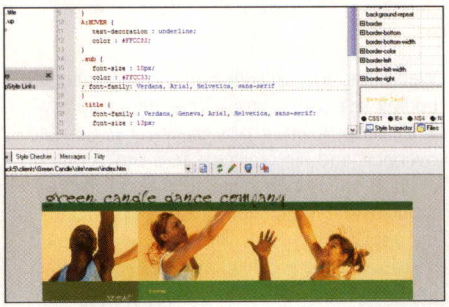
With so many sites already available, the first issue that must be addressed is whether your proposed site provides something new and, if not, how you intend to do things better. Similarly, yours may be the only site to feature your pet cat Tiddles, but you need to question whether this merits enough interest to capture and maintain an audience.

There's also no point in creating a site simply because nobody has a similar product currently on the market. There's a reason why no-one sells chocolate-covered hedgehogs on a stick, and chucking a dotcom at the end of it isn't going to magically generate sales. Remember, your site concept is rather like a business plan, and needs careful consideration to increase its chances of success.

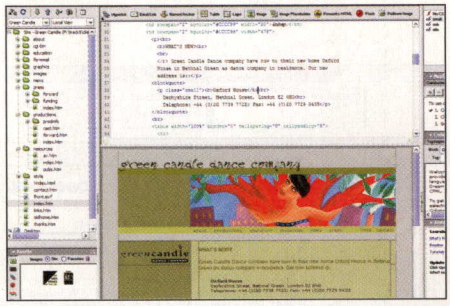
The BBC has a vast site run by teams of contributors, and it needs careful planning and management to remain current and consistent



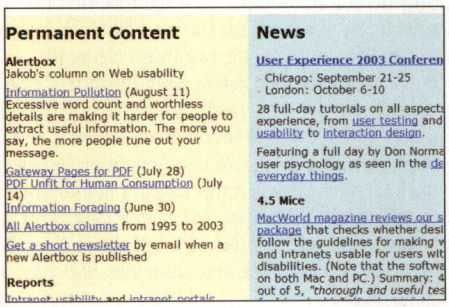
eBay has loads of functionality available through backend database systems, but the design is kept clean and simple for greater flexibility



Applications such as TopStyle provide more control over the unique syntax required by CSS files, and it has a dynamic preview system



Power apps like Dreamweaver allow you the most control over all aspects of your site's design and technical functionality


Permanent Content
Alertbox
Jakob's column on Web usability
Information Pollution (August 11)
Excessive word count and worthless details are making it harder for people to extract useful information. The more you say, the more people tune out your message.
Gateway Pages for PDF (July 28)
PDF Unfit for Human Consumption (July 14)
Information Foraging (June 30)
All Alertbox columns from 1995 to 2003
Get a short newsletter by email when a new Alertbox is published
Reports
News
User Experience 2003 Conferen
Chicago: September 21-25
London: October 6-10
28 full-day tutorials on all aspects experience, from user testing and usability to interaction design.
Featuring a full day by Don Norma user psychology as seen in the de everyday things.
4.5 Mice
MacWorld magazine reviews our s package that checks whether desi follow the guidelines for making w and intranets usable for users wit disabilities. (Note that the softwa on both Mac and PC.) Summary: 4 out of 5, "thorough and useful tes

*Jakob Nielsen is considered a usability guru, but it can be argued that his site (**www.useit.com**) is one of the least usable, with no discernable navigation and a structure that isn't instantly obvious*

The initial concept will largely determine the design and functionality of your site as well as its general tone. A corporate brochure site will invariably have unique features when compared with a tribute site to The Wombles, for example. An original idea presented in an original manner will go a long way to drawing attention and interest to your proposed site, but keeping things well organised and easy to navigate are also crucial factors into the longevity of not just your site, but also the purpose behind it.

Solid structure

Although the physical file structure of your site is irrelevant to the end user, this often provides a useful way for you as the site manager to organise the content. Files can be presented flat in the root directory of the site, but this quickly presents management headaches as you locate and name your constantly growing collection of unique files. A much better practice is to create folders to logically organise content.

This method also allows logical addresses to be created for your site content. For example, if we use our earlier Wombles analogy we could create a folder for Orinoco to contain specific information that could be distributed using the site address of www.yourdomain.co.uk/Orinoco.page.htm. We can reduce this address further by specifying the filename of the folder's main page as index.htm or default.htm in which case www.yourdomain.co.uk/Orinoco will suffice.

The actual copy that will populate the site often determines this content structure, which in turn can be used to determine a more logical navigation structure, with main areas and their sub-areas defined in an order that becomes quickly apparent to the visitor.

Optimum imagery

The graphical content can provide not only visual illustration, but also determine the design and mood of your site. Naturally, this should be done in such a way as to be reflective of and consistent with your content matter, without becoming overbearing or making your pages impractical to download.

With the rise in broadband connectivity, you could be forgiven for thinking that optimising your graphics to be the highest quality at the lowest file size is no longer an important issue. But there will be 56Kb modem users for some while yet, and to expect them to wait a long time for a huge background image to load that provides mere eye candy is simply unreasonable.

Geek speak

Local and remote access

Your developing site will originally be created on your own computer, but ultimately hosted on a publicly available server. In this context your computer gives your local access to your files, while the server is considered to be remote.

Browser cache

An area on your hard disk that your browser will use as temporary storage of pages, graphics and other site components that you've recently viewed. Should these files then be referenced in other pages, they can be retrieved from the cache instead of the remote host to speed up page delivery.

Image optimisation

Graphics files are large and bloated beasts that take some time to download. Optimising images is the process of getting the best quality at the lowest file size to speed up the delivery of your pages.

Mouseover event

An event occurs with any user interaction to a Web page through the browser. A 'mouseover' event is recognised when the mouse passes over an object and is frequently used to trigger rollover buttons.

Accessibility

A term used to define whether a site has been created to consider users with, for example, limited vision. This might be as simple as providing an alternate version of your site that considers more legible font colours and sizing, or a little more complex to incorporate code that can be understood by dedicated screen-reading software.

This isn't to say your designs should contain minimal graphics, rather that you consider using them in an intelligent way. Building your pages around common templates, for example, will generally refer to the same graphics which,

Photoshop's Save for Web feature can optimise graphics. Choose the best format then configure its saving attributes to get a small file size

What NOT to do

Get too ambitious

Know your limitations and keep your design and functionality within your own capability. You may find a groovy JavaScript effect that you're tempted to use, but if it requires modifying or breaks down you'll need to be able roll your sleeves up and get things sorted.

Add animated GIFs

Including animated graphics generally becomes too distracting for the viewer. There are some rare occasions when animated GIFs can add to a page's design, but these are rare and are best left to more experienced designers to risk including.

Use frames

A sensitive issue, as many sites make use of frames for navigation etc. You will find some good use for frames, but they become problematic on larger sites, as specific pages become impossible for visitors to bookmark because the browser will only remember the frameset.

Use Flash

Flash is best left to those in the know. By all means experiment with the flexibility and interactivity the software allows, but only integrate it when you've mastered it. Poor use of Flash can have similar problems to animated GIFs and can all too easily lead to inaccessible content.

Overcomplicate style sheets

Your visitors need to know the difference between text and links as well as identifying different levels of headings. Keep your copy legible and identifiable, and you'll find your visitors can fluently read the content without being confused as to how the page is laid out.

Design only for you

Sure, that amazing site you've spent months creating looks amazing on your state-of-the-art home PC, but it might not look so good to someone still using a 486. Always design with your end user in mind, and try to test your pages in a variety of resolutions.

once loaded in an original page, will be loaded much quicker on subsequent pages through the local browser cache instead of needing to be downloaded again from the remote server.

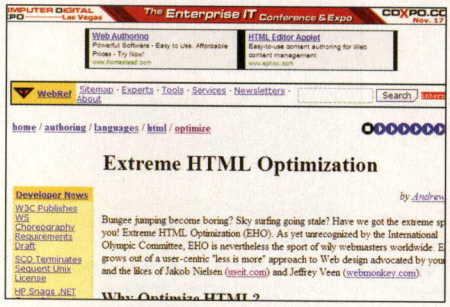
Making use of the cache in such a way will allow unique images that support the content of a page to be accessed and downloaded much faster.

The need for speed

Presenting your site visitors with their requested content as quickly as possible will often maintain their attention for longer, as they determine the relevance of your site to their requirements. If a page or a crucial graphic is reluctant to load, you will often find your visitors preferring to return to Google to find an alternative source of information.

Optimising imagery should be a standard feature that any Web designer considers and we've already mentioned using the browser cache, but there are other methods of increasing the speed with which your site is delivered. Taking care of your coding by making good use of nested tags or Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) in place of outdated <font> tags will not only make your HTML pages smaller in file size, but also allow the browser to understand their structure and access referenced graphic files much quicker.

Even though the file size of the HTML page itself may seem insignificant at only a few kilobytes, this is quickly increased as associated image files etc are required to be downloaded. Trying to keep a 50Kb ceiling on the combined weight of your pages' assets will improve the chances of your pages being delivered quickly and reliably.



*Learn more about optimising your HTML code through the useful WebReference site at **www.webreference.com/authoring/languages/html/optimize**. It is a great resource for discovering more about getting the most out of your Web site*

> **"ADDING INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS CAN IMPROVE THE GENERAL USABILITY"**

Getting interactive

Adding interactive elements to your site design can also improve on the general usability and familiarity of a site. Rollover graphics are a common navigation feature used to draw attention to a site's navigable areas that many Web-authoring packages turn from a complex coding task into a simple drag and drop affair, while drop-down menus give a more detailed overview and direct access to a site's content.

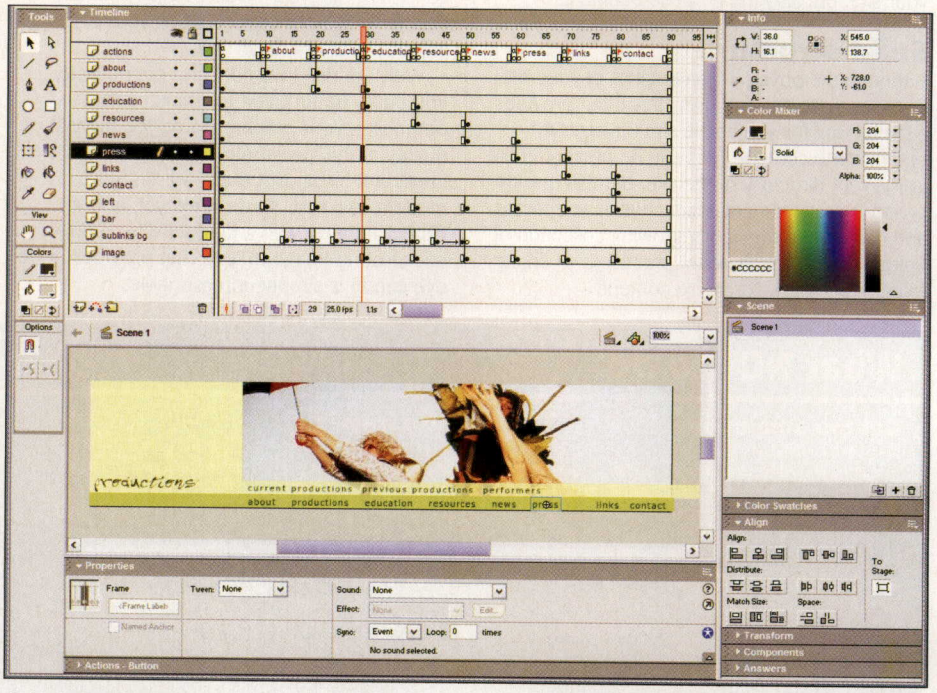
Flash components can also be used to facilitate site interaction, although the nature of the application makes virtually any end result possible – which can all too easily result in interactive elements becoming unwieldy and unfamiliar. Keeping things simple, logical and intuitive is a fundamental usability trait that can only be determined by studying how the best sites manage to achieve such a task.

As with static graphic or design elements, these should be consistent with the appearance of your site and integrate naturally. You may feel that bevelled buttons which change colour and depress with the 'mouse over' event provide an obvious method, but if this doesn't fit into your overall page design they will simply look amateurish and unprofessional. This will ultimately reflect back onto your site, and you as its creator.

Keeping consistency

Consistency is not just unique to your site's visual elements. Content too should flow from page to page and read as though the same author had at least edited it. Large organisations will often employ house style methods that determine the way text is presented from grammatical syntax down to whether a particular word should be capitalised – do you choose 'internet' or 'Internet', for example?

Similarly, the font face, size and weight your site makes use of should be the same



Flash provides the ultimate control for Web-based interactive elements, but be careful to keep things identifiable and usable, otherwise you run the risk of making the site confusing. Too many distractions will only turn your visitors off as well

Planning the perfect site

There's plenty of work to be done before you even think about your new domain name. You'll need to have a clear idea of what your site will provide and how this will be unique and original. Check out the competition and see how they do things – can you learn from their mistakes or benefit from their experience?

Content will need careful planning and compiling before it's broken down into defining categories which may influence the structure and navigation of your site. Sketch out possible structures on paper and play around with alternative ideas before committing yourself.

Consider the future of your site and how this might influence the structure, or you may find yourself having to revise things before too long. This will throw up potential issues with how your navigation might work or your style sheets be developed, which will also influence the final design.

Even your preliminary layouts should be sketched on paper as you consider all eventualities. You'll be wanting to keep some consistency between the different areas of your site, but each will have its own requirements, so planning ahead will highlight common layout elements that can be used to create such consistency.

You can never do too much preliminary work when planning a new site. Only with all eventualities considered can you start working on actual designs or functional aspects, and see your site develop into something that will not only impress your visitors but also keep them coming back for more.

Just don't forget about maintaining it once it's uploaded. After all, a Web site is never truly finished…

*With careful planning you can create a design that offers variety through colour, for example, while retaining consistency through layout and typography. Check out **www.greencandledance.com** to see a good example*

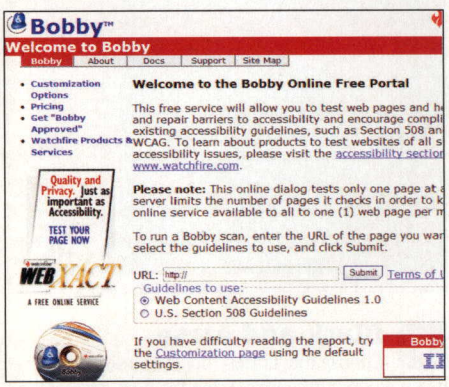
throughout your site, with different headings considered and defined to match their purpose and position in the context of your copy.

The most reliable method of doing this is to make use of Cascading Style Sheets, or CSS files, which can link to all your site's individual HTML files and define the basic text parameters along with such headings, footers or other unique text instances. As well as ensuring your text remains consistent, the use of CSS also allows you to instantly change the global appearance of your text by simply amending a single CSS file, should you choose to alter your design in future or provide accessible alternatives to your page layout.

Small print

Even with the most flattering balance of design and typography your site may still present problems. Users with visual impairments may not be able to distinguish that subtle colour difference between your text and background, or simply will not be able to read the small font size that you've decided gives your copy the most sophisticated appearance.

Legislation is already in place in the US and is currently being debated in the UK as to how accessible Web sites should be to these users. Again, common sense should dictate that you must consider such users with your original site design, but even if this is impossible due to imposed design guidelines laid down by a



*The Bobby site **(bobby.watchfire.com/bobby)** provides a wealth of information that will help you create the most accessible site, along with online tools that'll give you some idea as to how visible your site is to users with visual impairments*

Sites such as the Guardian newspaper need to organise a huge amount of information that changes by the hour. Studying how such large sites manage such a task will help you organise things on a smaller scale

client, you should still consider providing alternative presentation.

Various accessibility options are available through HTML to aid dedicated text readers and help users with disabilities understand the logic and structure behind your page design. Many Web-authoring packages such as Dreamweaver go to some lengths to consider these issues, but one of the most effective methods that doesn't necessarily require excessive or duplicate workloads is, again, through clever use of CSS.

For example, you might provide visually impaired users with a simple link that accesses an alternative style sheet with improved font characteristics and colour contrasts that make your site much more visible. With only a little consideration you'll be extending the potential user base and welcoming even more visitors to your site.

Content is king

Content is by far the most important component of a good Web site. Without strong content even the most cutting-edge design won't be able to get your site into your visitors' Favourites list and start experiencing those valuable return visits. We've considered the structure of the information, but if the content proves to be badly written or researched, your readers will fail to be impressed and simply go elsewhere.

Becoming the definitive site for your chosen subject or product is the holy grail of the Internet community. If you want your site to become the next Amazon, you'll need to make sure your content is current, comprehensive and reliable. And if you manage to balance things out with the other points we've already considered, you may well be on the way to creating a truly impressive online presence.

But don't just rely on your own expectations. Show as many people as possible your site, ask their opinion and be prepared to adapt your work if they all come back with similar comments. Remember, the design of your site is subjective – that green and purple colour scheme may not meet with universal approval and may need to be changed. ■

Crimes against Web design

Magic 15 ball

www.magic15ball.com/home.html

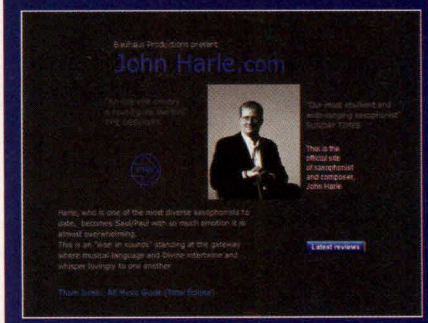
An interesting example of poor design, as this site is deliberately designed to be bad, with animated GIFs, broken graphics, pop-ups, mouse tails, 'under construction' signs and cheesy background MIDI music all rolled into a single site that contains nothing of real interest apart from links to external sites.

WELCOME
!!! Current Terror Alert Level !!!
Here are some of my interests.
My Star Wars page Click here
I always wanted a lavalamp. Click here
This is for those romantic nights. Click here
Space the final frontier. Click here
*** Chachi and his travels. Click here

John Harle

www.johnharle.com

For such a respected musician, John Harle really does have one of the worst Web sites. A classic case of a complete disregard for design, with navigation that changes by the page leaving you quickly lost within a maze of information. Only recommended if you really need to know what the composer is doing.



QuinciSoft

members.xoom.virgilio.it/glquinci.Windex.html

From someone who claims to know HTML, this site is full of errors from broken graphics and missing files, through to poor translation that makes the content impossible to understand. The garish design only goes to show the author's inability to balance tasteful colours or use of graphics applications.

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In brief:
Task: Create a Web site with Photoshop & ImageReady
Software I need: Photoshop and ImageReady
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: Give it an hour

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Build a fully-working home page in Photoshop

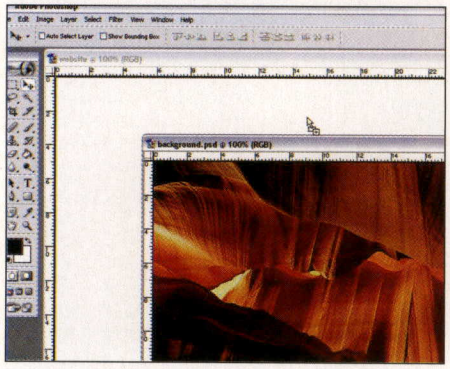
WE SHOW YOU HOW TO USE PHOTOSHOP TO CREATE A HOME PAGE, THEN TAKE IT OVER TO IMAGEREADY TO ADD SLICES AND ROLLOVER BUTTONS

PHOTOSHOP HAS BECOME so in tune with Web designers that creating a snazzy home page has become fairly simple. The power of Photoshop together with the top functionality of ImageReady – which prepares your image to become an interactive interface for your site – will give you all the tools you need to create a stunning site.

In this tutorial we'll start by showing you how to build up the background image of the page. This involves layering many different images for an interesting but subtle background that won't interfere with anything in the foreground.

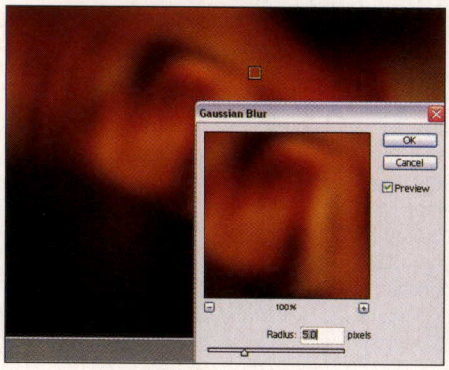
Once the background is complete we can start adding some foreground detail, and the main tool we'll use will be the Vector Shape to create the navigational elements. We'll also apply Layer Styles to the buttons to give them a shapely look.

The final part will see the image move over into ImageReady, where it will be sliced and rollovers added to the buttons, before exporting the whole process to a Web page.



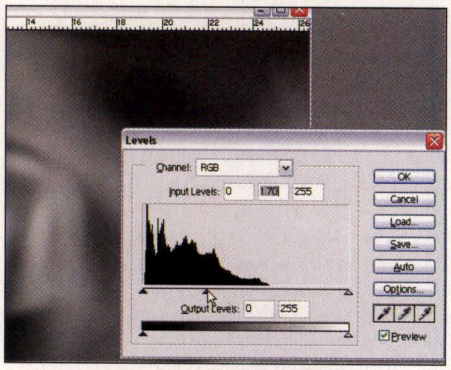
1 Starting up

Open Photoshop and create a new document 750 pixels wide by 500 pixels high at 72 pixels per inch with RGB as the Colour mode. Now open 'background.psd' from the cover disc and drag the image with the 'Move' tool into your document.



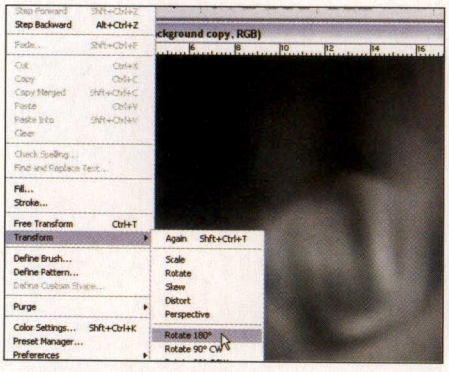
2 Call the spin doctor

Go to the Filter menu and choose 'Blur' and 'Radial Blur'. In the pop-up window make sure it's set to spin with '29' as the amount and click 'OK'. Now go to the Filter menu again and choose 'Blur' then 'Gaussian Blur' and add a 5-pixel blur to the image.



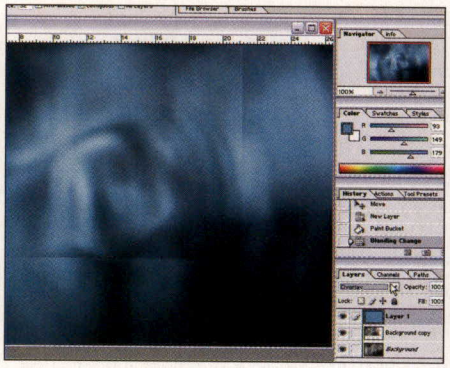
3 Change the colour

Go to 'Image', 'Mode' and select 'Greyscale' then click 'Yes' to flatten the image. Now choose 'Image', 'Mode' and 'RGB' to change it back to colour. Press 'CTRL' + 'L' to edit the levels and drag the middle input level to '1.70'.



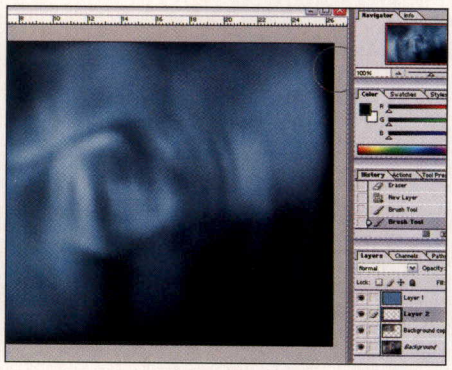
4 Flipping picture!

Now flip the image to help make it look better. Go to the Image menu and pick 'Rotate Canvas' and 'Flip Canvas Horizontal'. Copy this layer by dragging it to the New Layer icon in the Layer palette. Go to the Edit menu and choose 'Transform and Rotate 180°'.



5 Colour at last

With the duplicated layer selected, change the blending mode to 'Overlay' in the Layer palette and move it off-centre as shown. Create a new layer and fill it with light blue using the 'Paint Bucket' tool, then change this layer's blending mode to 'Overlay' as well.



6 Black and erase

Choose the 'Eraser' tool then a soft-edged brush around 200 pixels. Erase the hard edge of the copied background layer. Create a new layer and use a soft-edged brush of around 100 pixels to paint along the bottom and right edge to fade the image to black.

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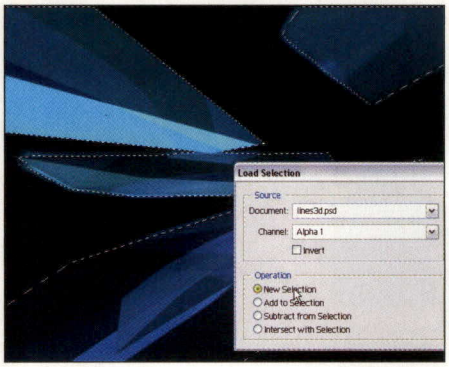
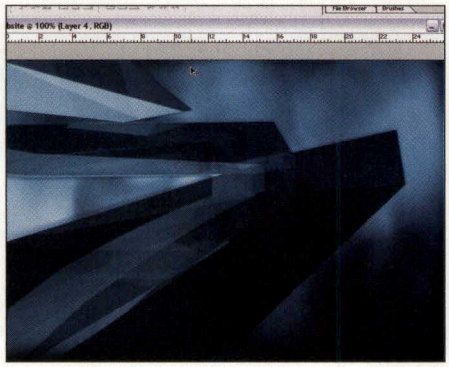


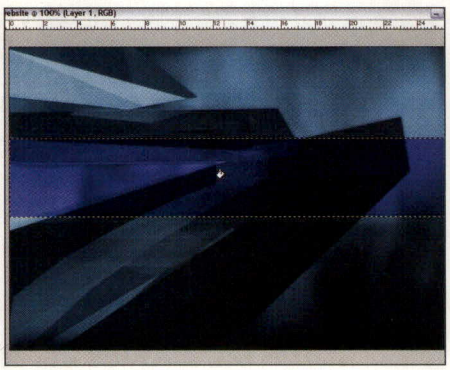
7 Open an image

Open 'lines3d.psd' from the CD and go to 'Select'. Choose 'Load Selection', 'Alpha1', 'OK' and drag the image in the flashing lines to your document using the Move tool. Change the blend mode to 'Luminosity' and place above the background copy.



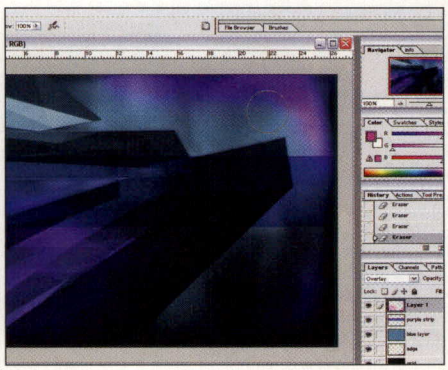
8 Scale the layer

In the Image menu choose 'Transform' then 'Scale'. In the Context bar at the top of Photoshop type in '75%' for width and height; now double-click to apply and position as shown. Open 'grid.psd' from the cover CD and drag to your document.



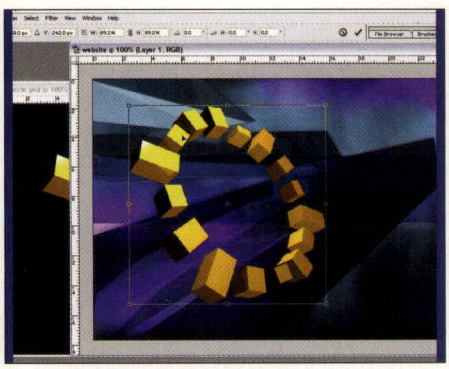
9 It's all in the blend

Change the blending mode of the Grid layer to 'Screen' with an opacity of 30% in the Layer palette. Create a new layer above the others, and select an area using the Rectangular Marquee tool. Fill it with purple; change blending to 'Multiply' with 70% opacity.



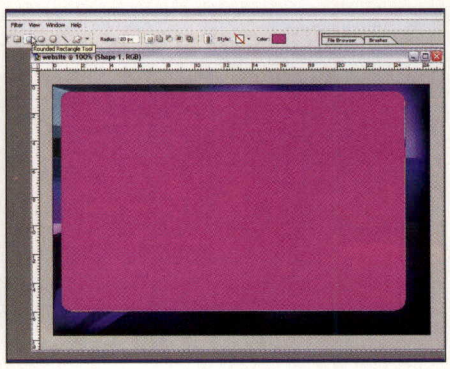
10 Add a little colour

Create a new layer, change the blend mode to 'Opacity' and select a soft-edged brush of around 100 pixels. Select a bright pink in the Colour palette and paint this on to create highlights. If it's too bright, use the Eraser tool with its opacity changed to 50%.



11 Add the circle

Open '3dcircle.psd' from the CD and load the Alpha channel as a selection as you did in step 7. Drag the area to your document and select the Edit menu, choosing 'Transform' and 'Scale'. Hold down the 'SHIFT' key and drag the corner to scale down.



12 A vector layer

Select the Vector Shape tool and the Rounded Rectangle option, and change the corner radius to 20 pixels in the Context bar at the top of Photoshop. Draw a rectangle on the screen as shown above – it doesn't matter what colour, as this will change.

Jargon buster

Pixels

Pixels are the tiny dots that make up your monitor screen. By working in pixels you are specifying the exact size that will appear on every screen. While monitor sizes vary, pixels are usually around the same size, so therefore your design should be the same regardless of platform or browser. Pixels contain individual colour information which builds up into an image.

Filters

Photoshop comes with a large selection of filters which will alter the image to some degree or another, usually through a pop-up window which allows you to control the settings. Filters can be purchased as third-party plug-ins to Photoshop to give extra functionality. The key to using them is not to just use one filter on maximum setting but to build up subtle artistic effects through several.

Colour mode

Images can be made of one colour mode, but these modes can be changed as necessary by the user. RGB stands for Red, Green, Blue and is the common mode for working with screen-based design, as pixels are made out of RGB pigments. Other modes include CMYK, which matches the four printing inks when printing professionally – and there is also greyscale, which is made of 256 levels of grey, from white to black.

Brushes

Obviously these are not real brushes, but whenever you select the Paintbrush or Eraser tool you have the option of setting the size and whether the brush has a hard edge or soft edge from under the Context bar at the top of Photoshop. Other more complex options can be set from the Brush tab on the right of the Context bar. Here you can emulate using natural media such as paint or charcoal.

Alpha channel

An Alpha channel is a special channel which can be saved or loaded if it already exists. Your image is typically made of three channels, RGB, if working to this colour mode. The Alpha channel is an extra channel which contains a cut-out of an image. In the tutorial, the files that contain an Alpha channel came from a 3D package which automatically created the Alpha channel ready for use here.

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Web resources

Absolute Cross
www.absolutecross.com/tutorials/photoshop/

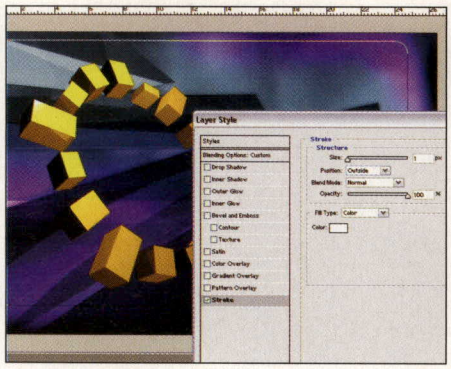
This has really good Photoshop resources, including a superb tutorial section giving help with anything from creating text effects to slicing images. A download section provides textures, interfaces and wallpapers.

Team Photoshop
www.teamphotoshop.com/photoshop/tutorials/ps_tut.php

This is one of the greatest sources of online help for all things Photoshop. Tutorials are split into sections including user-submitted tutorials, which you can add to. There's also a great community section.

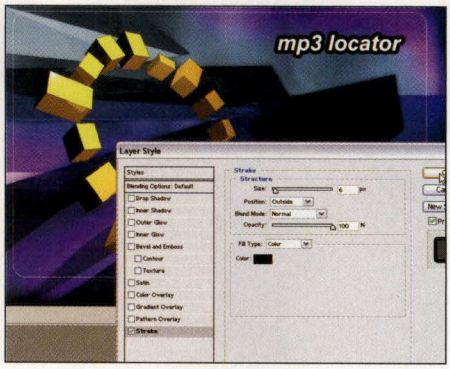
Power users' tip

ONE OF THE newer features in Photoshop that has been present since version 6 is the Context bar which runs along the top of the Photoshop interface just under the menus. Whenever you select a tool you will see that the Context bar changes to suit the tool that's selected. Here you can select various vector shapes and styles when using the Vector Shape tool, or change the size, flow and opacity of brushes. Remember that if you change from a brush you've been using with the Paint Brush tool and switch to the Eraser or Clone tool, the Brush settings will change to the last used setting of that tool.



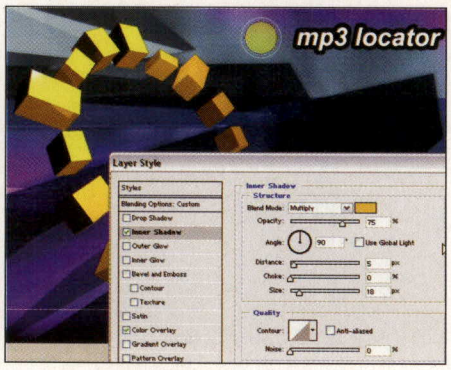
13 Layer style

Double-click the layer and the Layer Style window appears. Under 'Advanced Blending', turn the fill opacity to 100% with the general blending option changed to 'Overlay' and 50%. Hit 'Stroke' and make the line 1 pixel in width, changing the colour to white.



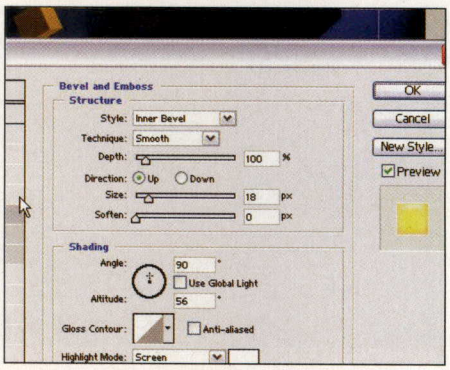
14 Add a title

Click on the 'Text' tool and type the headline of your choice at 36 points in white, then double-click the layer to bring up 'Layer Style'. Click 'Stroke' and add a 6-pixel stroke, changing the colour to black. Click 'OK' to apply the style to the layer.



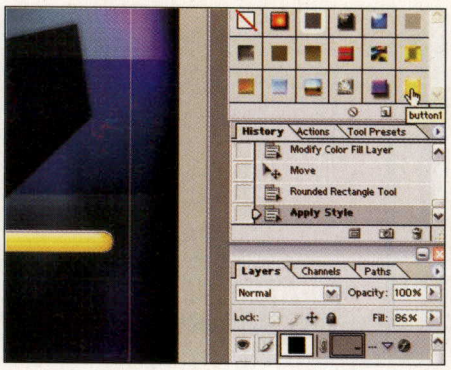
17 Embossed layer style

Double-click the layer in the Layers palette, click the 'Colour Overlay' option and alter the colour to 'FFFF111'. Click the 'Inner Shadow' option and alter the shadow colour to 'E5AB1F'. Change the angle to 90° and increase the size of the shadow to 18 pixels.



18 Make it glow

Click 'Inner Glow', increase the choke to 6% and the size to 8%. Now click 'Bevel' and 'Emboss', increasing the size to 18 pixels, and alter the shading to 90° with an altitude of 56°. Alter the shadow colour to 'F1B31E' and click 'OK' to return to the Layer Style.



21 Arrow style

If your arrow arrived with the same style options as your button, you can change the style on the Context bar at the top of Photoshop. Now draw a button with the Rounded Rectangle tool, clicking on the 'Styles' palette and selecting your 'button1' style.

22 Copy the button

Copy the Button layer twice by dragging the layer over the New layer icon in the Layers palette. Now change the name of the layers to 'button1', 'button2' and 'button3'. Use the Text tool to add appropriate text layers over each button as shown.

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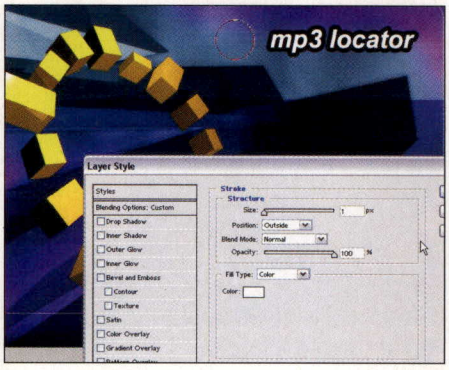
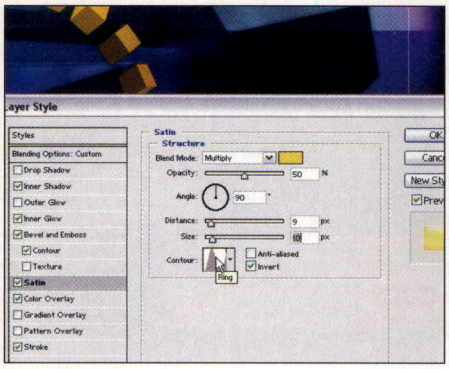


15 Draw a circle

Click the Vector Shape tool and select the circle. Hold down 'SHIFT' and draw a circle on the screen next to the heading. Double-click the layer to bring up the 'Layer Style' and add the same attributes as you did in step 13. Hit 'OK' to apply.

16 Copy the circle

Copy the circle layer by dragging it down to the New Layer icon in the Layer palette. Go to the Edit menu and choose 'Transform' and 'Scale'. Hold down 'SHIFT' + 'ALT' and scale down the new layer slightly. Double-click to apply the transform.

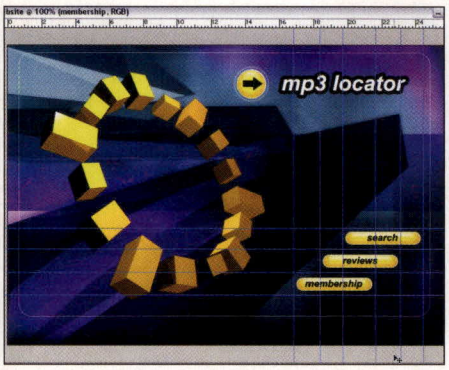


19 Nice contours

Click on the 'Contour' option and change the contour to 'Half round', making it anti-aliased with a range of 67%, then click 'Satin'. Change the colour to 'EFCF39' and the angle to 90° with a distance of 9. Alter the contour to 'Ring'; click the blending options.

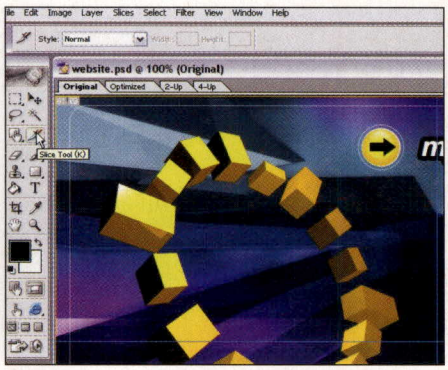
20 Blending options

Change the blending back to 'Normal' at 100% with the Advanced Blending opacity set to '85%'. Click the 'New Style' button and save this style as 'button1'. Click 'OK'. Add another vector shape, choose the 'Custom' shape and add a black arrow.



23 Guide me in

The image is now complete. All we need do is get it ready for slicing up in ImageReady. If you can't see your rulers, go to the View menu and choose 'Rulers'. Drag in guides from the rulers and position them onscreen as shown above, then save the image.



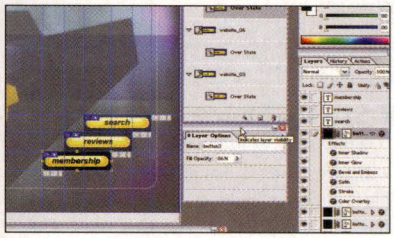
24 Jump to ImageReady

At the bottom of the toolbar is a button which takes your image to ImageReady. Click this and in a few moments ImageReady will open, displaying your image. As you can see, the interface is very similar to Photoshop. Pick 'Slice' from the toolbar, ready to start.

How to...

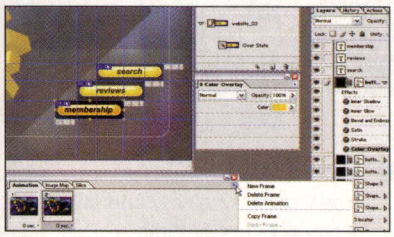
Creating animated rollovers

As well as creating standard rollovers that change colour when the user moves the mouse over the button, it's also possible to create rollovers that animate. In the next three steps we'll show you how to create glowing rollovers.



Create rollover state

Use the Slice Select tool and select the slice you want to turn into a rollover. In the Rollovers palette add a rollover state then find the appropriate layer for the button, as we'll need this later. In this case it is button3 layer. Now click inside the 'Animation' palette.



Duplicate the current

Click on the icon in the Animation palette that duplicates the current frame. Now select the new frame and on the button3 layer select the 'Colour Overlay' option. In the Colour Overlay palette change the colour to orange. Then select the right arrow in the Animation palette.

Tween

From the options select 'Tween' and add two frames. Duplicate the frame again and turn the Colour Overlay back to yellow. Again select 'Tween' from the options and add another two frames. In the Optimize palette alter the slice to a GIF, and it'll animate on rollover.

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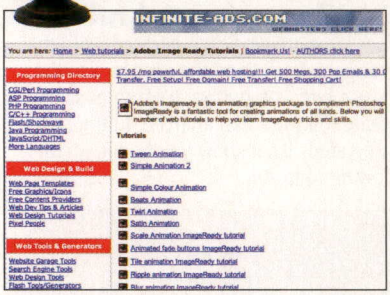
Web resources



Sticky Sauce

www.stickysauce.com/tutorials/imageready/tutorialsindex.htm

This is aimed at making sites as sticky as possible so people keep coming back. The tutorials cover common Web themes in Photoshop and Illustrator, but also go into the finer areas of Web page building.

Web Class

www.webclass.ru/eng/Tutorials/ImageReady/index.html

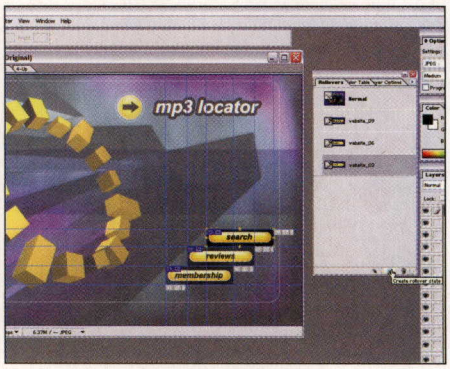
This is not only a great tutorial resource for ImageReady and Photoshop, but offers help with most areas of site production – perfect for budding Webmasters needing help with areas like scripting and Flash production.

Power users' tip

THE LAST STAGE to your production process when creating a site through Photoshop/ImageReady should be the production of rollovers. Because rollovers are created to change elements that appear onscreen, if you start creating areas of your design at this stage you'll find these areas are only visible when you roll over certain buttons. This is frustrating, but can be rectified by turning on the Layers Visibility on the non-over states of buttons. The easiest way to avoid problems is to add the rollovers last, and save your work before creating them. You can then at least revert to the saved version if changes are needed.

25 Optimise the settings

The top palette in ImageReady is 'Optimize'. Alter the settings to 'JPEG' with a quality of 45 and a blur of 0.02. Setting this now saves having to change it on every slice later. Click and drag from top right of the guides to bottom left of the guides on the first button.

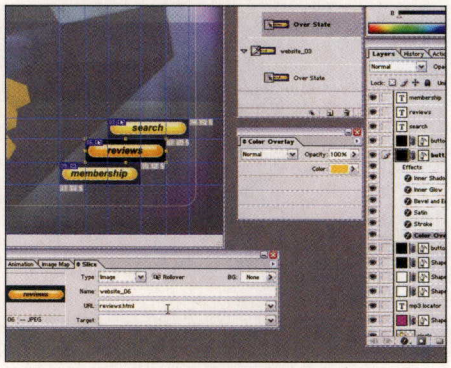


26 Slice the buttons

Slice around the remaining two buttons and the other slices will automatically fill in. We need to see the Rollovers palette now, so drag the palette down to get a good view. Select 'Slice Three' in this palette and click on the 'Create Rollover State' icon.

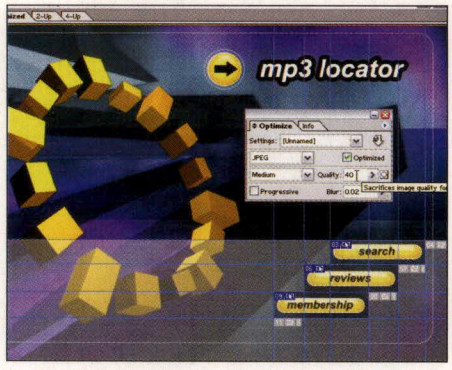
29 Add the URL

At the bottom of the screen is a palette with three tabs. Click the 'Slice' tab and add an appropriate URL for the button, such as 'search.html'. As you can see, there's also a target here. If you're working with a frameset you can target the exact frame.



30 Create another rollover

Click slice '6' and add a rollover state in the Rollovers palette. Select 'button2' layer in the Layers palette and the 'Colour Overlay' layer style as in step 27. Change the Colour Overlay to orange and add an appropriate URL, like 'reviews.html' in the Slice palette.



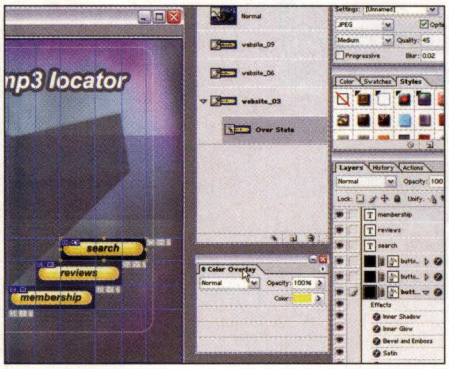
33 Amend the file size

To change the file size of your slices, click and hold the Slice tool, then select the 'Slice Select' tool from the tool flyout. Select 'slice1' and hit 'Optimized' to see a live update. Now amend the settings in the Optimize palette. This will update all the auto slices.

34 Save Optimized

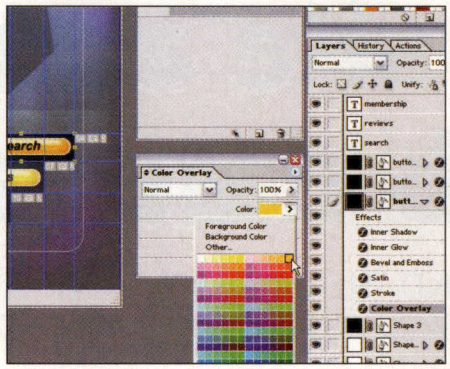
Go to the File menu and hit 'Save Optimized As'. Pick a suitable location and change the filename to 'index'. This will produce an index.html page and the relevant slices will be placed in an images folder; if no images folder is present ImageReady creates one.

0870 333 9731 WebFusion®
www.webfusion.co.uk seriously easy web hosting
Free, Unlimited Phone and Email Technical Support, 24/7/365



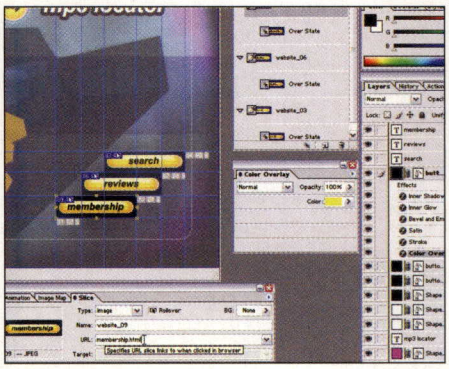
27 Layer style

Locate the layer 'button1' in the Layers palette. Click the arrow pointing to the right and it will point down and show the Layer Styles. Pick 'Colour Overlay' from the drop list. In the Rollovers palette drag the Colour Overlay tab out so it has its own palette.



28 And the little one said...

In the Colour Overlay palette click the arrow to the right of the Colour Cube and choose an orange colour. Click between 'Slice Three' and the rollover state in the Rollovers palette to see the colour variation that will occur when the mouse is over the button.



31 Last rollover

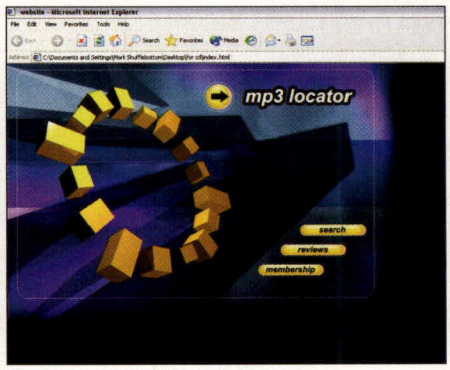
Repeat the last step creating a rollover state, and this time pick 'button3' layer in the Layers palette. Change the colour for the over state and add the URL 'membership.html'. This completes the rollover states, and the buttons should link to the appropriate pages.

32 Test the page

Now is a good time to save your work, so hit 'CTRL' + 'S'. Click on the Internet Explorer icon in the toolbar to test your page in your browser. This gives you the chance to test your rollovers to make sure they work, and you'll get a size report for your page.

35 Save and close

Save your document in ImageReady and close the program. You will need to close Photoshop also, as it should still be running in the background. Now start your favourite Web-authoring program and open your index page so that you can edit the page.



36 Modify the page

Change the page colour so that it's black. This will blend the graphic with the rest of the page. You can save your page and then open it in your browser to see the results of your home page. As the page is 750 pixels wide, it should fit in all browser windows.

Jargon buster

Layers

Layers are controlled through the Layers palette and are basically lots of images stacked in an order to build up an image into a montage. The layers can have areas of opacity, allowing you to see through each layer to the ones below, and can also have the overall opacity of that layer changed. Special layers can be added called 'Adjustment' layers which adjust the colour of all the layers below that layer.

Blending modes

Blending modes can be set differently for each layer and they dictate the way in which the layer blends with those immediately below it. The blending modes have been arranged into sections, with modes such as 'Multiply' removing all the white from a layer and others such as 'Screen' removing all the black from a layer. Blending modes help to build up subtle aesthetics to make the image more appealing.

Layer style

By double-clicking on a layer in the Layers palette you're given access to a whole variety of user-defined styles that will be applied to that layer. This is great for vector layers, as bevels and drop shadows can be added which are so detailed that no other application can give this much control over the layers. These styles can be saved and reused from the Styles palette.

Slicing

The process that involves marking out areas for slicing is usually done through adding guides. Then the slice tool slices up the image into individual images. This is done so that varying amounts of compression can be added to different slices if they contain different content, and to enable smaller areas to be turned into rollovers so the whole image doesn't have to change, and the file size is therefore kept down.

Rollovers

Rollovers are areas of an image programmed to change through JavaScript, which ImageReady creates when the images are exported. The JavaScript changes between two images as the mouse moves over the image, which provides useful feedback to the site visitor, as it lets them know what areas are interactive.

In brief:
Task: Work with a Web database in Dreamweaver
Software I need: Dreamweaver MX
Difficulty: Can get a bit hairy
Time I need: About 40 minutes

Create a site around your Web database

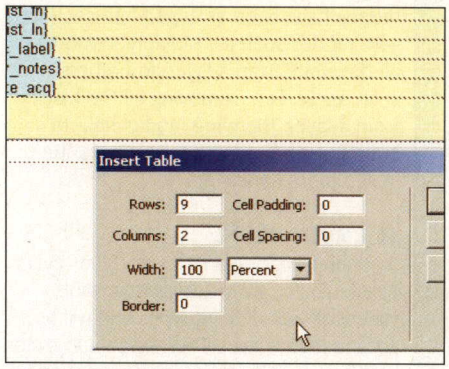
PART THREE

YOU'VE SET UP THE SERVER AND THE DATABASE. NOW FOR THE FINAL PART – WORKING WITH THE DATABASE USING DREAMWEAVER MX

WELL THIS IS IT, the final part of our tutorial. This time you'll take the admin page that displays the contents of your database and create an entry form to add further records. We're using another selection of CD covers to distinguish each entry.

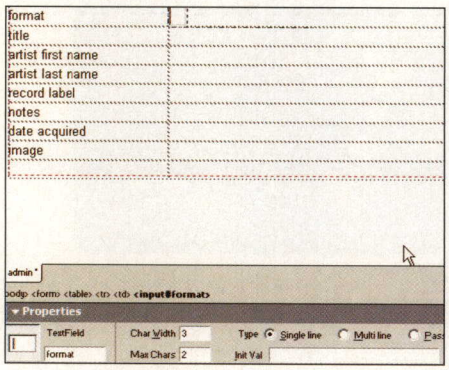
At some point we may want to edit our records, so we'll set up a page to edit whichever record we select. As some records may go out of date or be irrelevant, we'll also show you how to delete them. All this will be done from the admin page (created last time) without entering a line of programming, thanks to Dreamweaver's Server Behaviors.

Once the admin section is complete we'll build an index page to display the contents of the database, but rather than have all the records spill onto the screen as in our admin page, they'll be limited to two per page with a dynamic menu moving you between records. From building one page we'll get a page that will link to itself showing different records each time the dynamic navigation is selected. Again, you need not write any code.



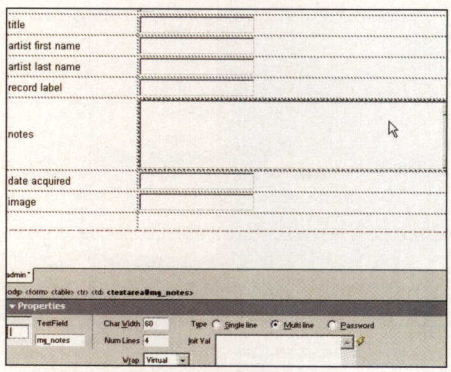
1 Inserting records

Last month we only had one record in the database, so now we'll create an online interface to add records. Open 'admin.php', and insert a form from the Insert panel below the table from last month. Insert a table and fill the details in as shown above.



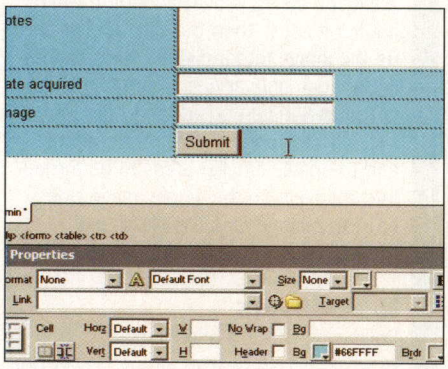
2 Add titles

Add a list of titles in the first column as shown, and modify the font to 'Arial'. Make the first column 160 pixels wide in the Properties palette; move the cursor to the second column, top cell and insert a text field. Name it 'format'; make it 3 characters wide.



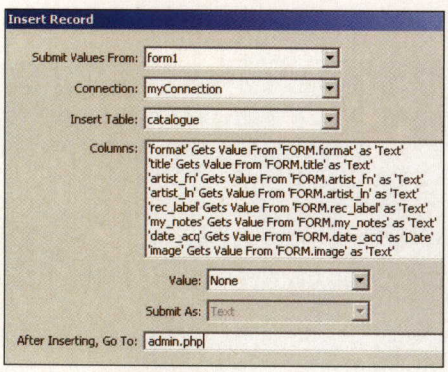
3 Add input text

Each row requires a text field with the exact match of name from the rows in the database, so insert fields with the names 'title', 'artist_fn', 'artist_ln', 'rec_label', 'my_notes', 'date_acq' and 'image'. We've made the 'notes' text field a multi-line text field.



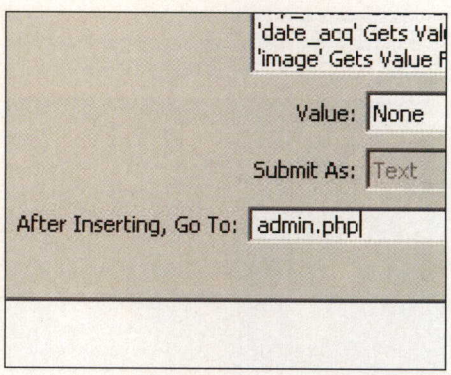
4 Submit button

If you highlight the cells of the table, you can add a background colour in the Properties palette. In the last cell of the table, position your cursor and add a 'Submit' button from the Insert panel. Now make sure the application panel is on the screen.


Insert Record
Submit Values From: form1
Connection: myConnection
Insert Table: catalogue
Columns: 'format' Gets Value From 'FORM.format' as 'Text'
'title' Gets Value From 'FORM.title' as 'Text'
'artist_fn' Gets Value From 'FORM.artist_fn' as 'Text'
'artist_ln' Gets Value From 'FORM.artist_ln' as 'Text'
'rec_label' Gets Value From 'FORM.rec_label' as 'Text'
'my_notes' Gets Value From 'FORM.my_notes' as 'Text'
'date_acq' Gets Value From 'FORM.date_acq' as 'Date'
'image' Gets Value From 'FORM.image' as 'Text'
Value: None
Submit As: Text
After Inserting, Go To: admin.php

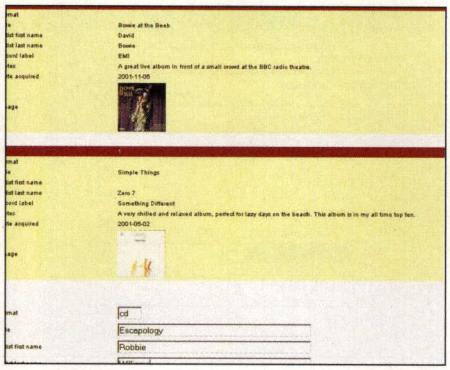
5 Insert Record

Click 'Server Behaviors' in the Application panel and hit the Plus icon. From the drop menu pick 'Insert Record', and a pop-up window appears. Alter the connection to 'myConnection' and select 'Catalogue'. The columns will tie up with the database.



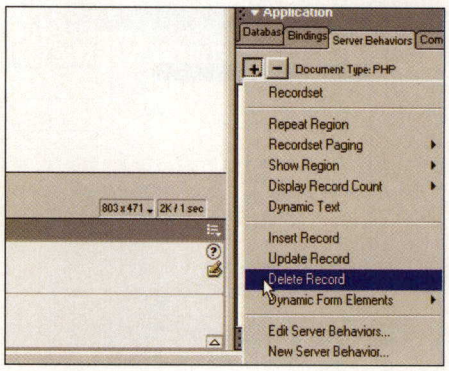
6 Copy some files

In the field 'After Inserting, Go to', add the name 'admin.php' so the page is reloaded after input. Save this, copy your CD cover images into your Images folder in the htdocs folder of Apache. You can also copy 'index.php' into the htdocs folder.



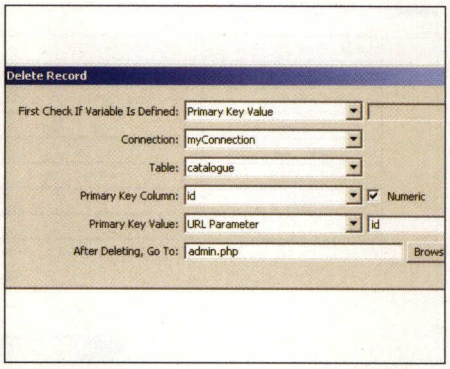
7 Test the page

Open a browser, connect to **http://localhost/admin.php**. You can now add more entries to your database. We've put more CD covers in the Images folder so you can add records for these: bowie.jpg, escapology.jpg, led-zeppelin.jpg, melody.jpg, tatu.jpg.



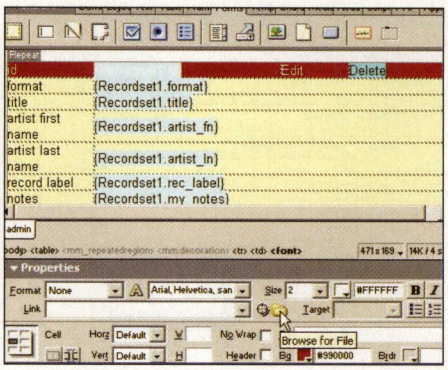
8 Create a Delete page

Once you've entered at least three more items, close the browser and return to Dreamweaver. Create a new PHP page and save it as 'delete.php' in the htdocs folder. Pick 'Delete Record' from the Plus icon on the Server Behaviors panel.



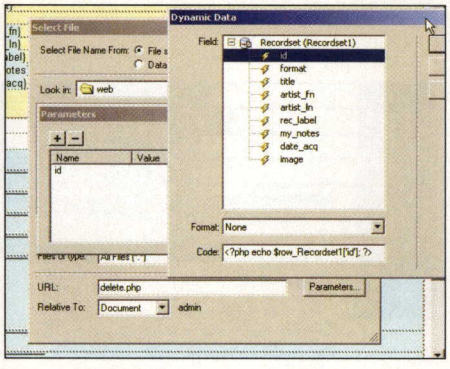
9 Delete Record

In the pop-up window change the connection to 'myConnection' and the table to 'Catalogue'. The primary key should be filled in automatically as the ID. Enter 'admin.php' as the URL to go to after deleting. Save and close the file; open 'admin.php'.



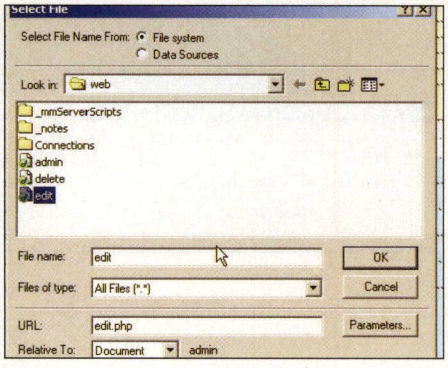
10 Link to Delete

In 'admin.php' we're going to link to the Delete file from the appropriate record. Highlight 'Delete' in the top row of the table; click the folder button 'Browse for File' to the right of the Link field in the Properties palette. In the pop-up hit 'delete.php'.



11 URL parameters

Next to 'URL' is a button labelled 'Parameters'. Click it and a new pop-up window appears. Under the name type 'ID'. Click in the field under 'Value' to see a Lightning symbol. Click this and from the dynamic data pop-up select 'ID'. Click 'OK' in each pop-up.



12 Editing information

We may also want to edit our records from time to time, so we need to create a new PHP document and save it as 'edit.php', then switch back to 'admin.php'. Highlight 'Edit' and browse for the file to link to, selecting 'edit.php' from your documents.

Jargon buster

Input text

Input text is a text field that allows the user to type details into the box and later submit the contents of that box for formatting. In the tutorial, the text fields take information for each field in the database. When the Submit button is pressed the data is added as a new record to the database.

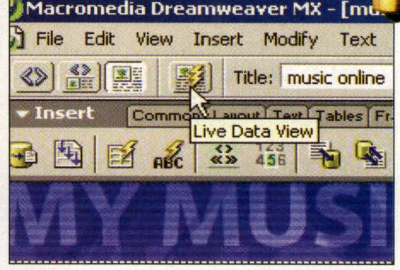
Delete Record

Because we are creating an admin page for our database, it's necessary to be able to delete records from the database, as from time to time certain entries may no longer be valid. This process simply removes the record through its unique ID marker.

URL parameters

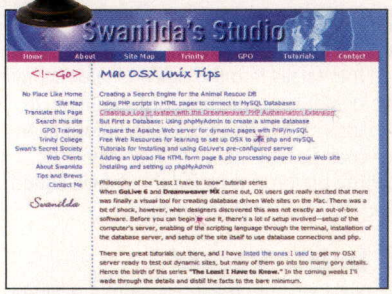
These help us to add special information to the URL when we're requesting info, so the link itself is dynamic, containing special info which will be passed from one page to another. The second page then knows which record has been selected, which means it can process the information sent via the link, and the user gets the desired record amended or deleted.

Power users' tip



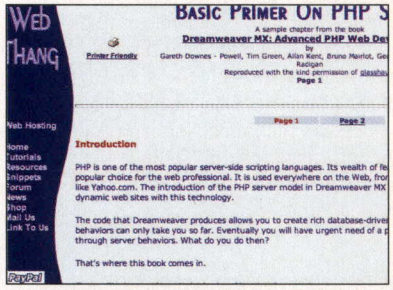
WHEREVER THERE IS a symbol that looks a little like a lightning bolt, this is where dynamic data will be displayed or can be added to a page. URLs can have dynamic data pass between pages, and even images can be gained from a dynamic source and so display whatever record is necessary. You can also work with dynamic data available in your document which is pulled live from the database, so you can see the results as if through a browser. Next to the three standard views of Code, Design or Design and Code, you will notice another icon for the Live Data view. Click this to see your database content directly on the page.

Web resources



Swanilda's Studio
swanilda.com/unix.html

Despite pics of swans on this site, you'll find tutorials about Dreamweaver and databases, eg 'Creating a login system' and 'Adding an upload file page'. Although this site is geared towards the Mac OS X platform, it will all work on a PC as the software is the same.

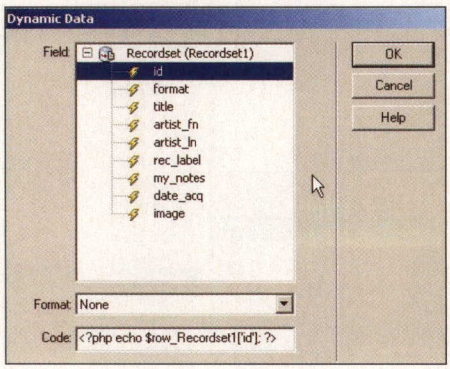


It's a Web Thang
www.webthang.co.uk/tuts/tuts_dmx/gh_adv_php/gh_adv_php1.asp

This site has a wealth of tutorials, with a section that helps you develop data-driven content via databases with Dreamweaver. There's also a page introducing you to the programming syntax of the PHP language.

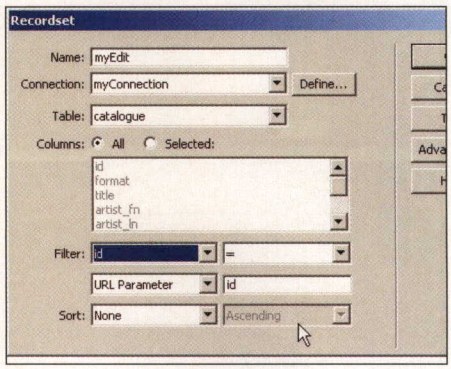
HTML Center
www.htmlcenter.com

The HTML Center goes much further than providing useful HTML information – the latest tutorials will help you in PHP development. The newest tutorials are posted on the home page, with help forums available if you have a specific problem.



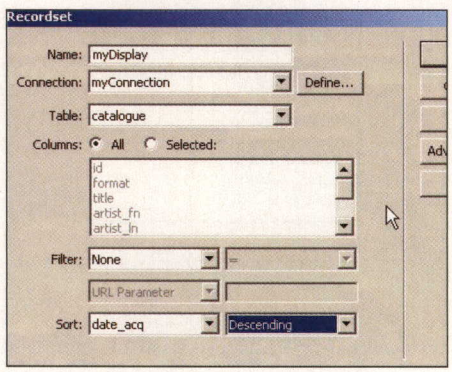
13 Edit parameters

Click the URL parameters and again enter 'ID' as the name. Click in the next field, hit the Lightning symbol, and from the Dynamic Data pop-up window hit 'ID'. Click 'OK' in each pop-up to return to the main admin.php page. Save this and switch to 'edit.php'.



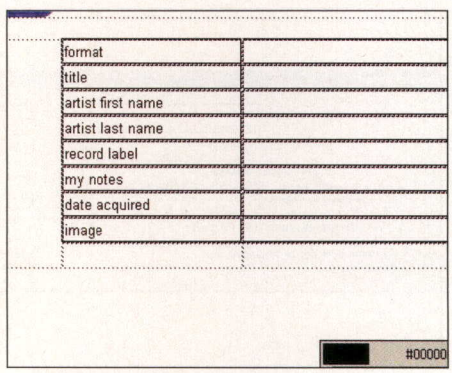
14 Create a recordset

In the Server Behaviors click the Plus icon and select 'Recordset' from the list. Name the connection 'myEdit' and select the details as shown. Change the filter from 'None' to 'ID', with 'ID' as the URL parameter; click 'OK' to complete the recordset.



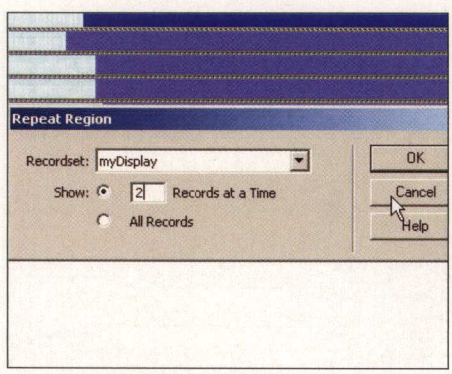
17 Test your admin page

Test your admin page in a browser by editing, deleting and creating new entries. When done, open 'index.php' as we're going to create a front end to display our database. Click the Plus icon in the Server Behavior panel, hit 'Recordset'; fill in details as shown.



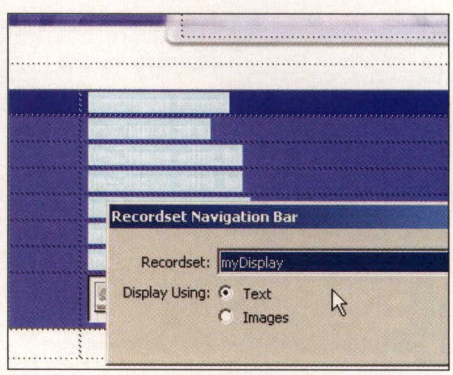
18 Insert a table

Click in the second cell onscreen and insert a table 9 rows by 2 columns, with a cell padding of 2 and 100% wide. Make the first column 160 pixels wide and add row headings as shown. Select all cells, alter the font to 'Arial' size '2' and the colour to 'white'.



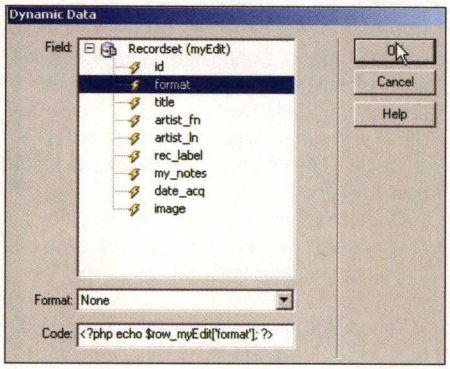
21 Repeat Region

Select the cell with the image and drag your cursor to the cell with the title format. They should be highlighted to show they're selected. Click the 'Server Behaviors' tab, hit the Plus icon and 'Repeat Region'. Enter details shown to limit the region to two records.



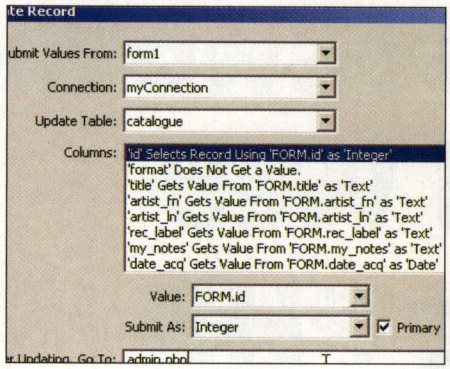
22 Application tab

Click the 'Application' tab on the Insert bar and place your cursor inside the navigation graphic at the top. Click 'Recordset Navigation Bar' in the Insert panel. Make sure it's set to 'Display text' and hit 'OK'. The graphics will lose their formatting, but don't worry.



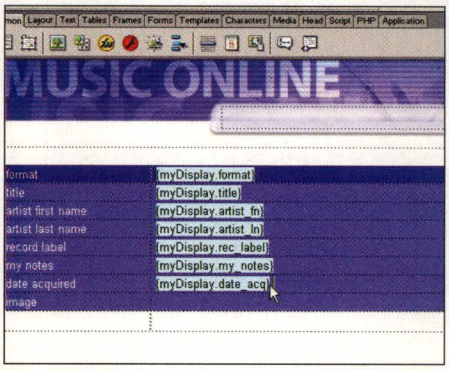
15 Create the form

We now need to create on the page the exact form we created in steps 1 to 4, with each input field named the same as in the database. Then hit the first text field and pick the Lightning icon in the Properties palette. In the pop-up select 'Format' and click 'OK'.


te Record
ubmit Values From: form1
Connection: myConnection
Update Table: catalogue
Columns: 'id' Selects Record Using 'FORM.id' as 'Integer'
'format' Does Not Get a Value.
'title' Gets Value From 'FORM.title' as 'Text'
'artist_fn' Gets Value From 'FORM.artist_fn' as 'Text'
'artist_ln' Gets Value From 'FORM.artist_ln' as 'Text'
'rec_label' Gets Value From 'FORM.rec_label' as 'Text'
'my_notes' Gets Value From 'FORM.my_notes' as 'Text'
'date_acq' Gets Value From 'FORM.date_acq' as 'Date'
Value: FORM.id
Submit As: Integer
Primary

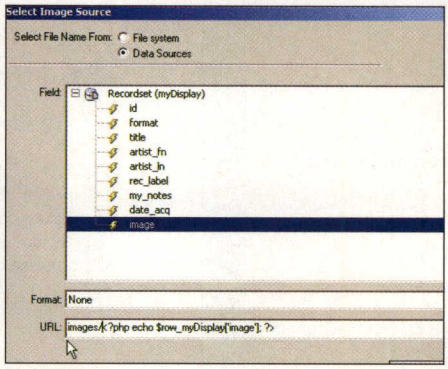
16 Update server

You'll need to do the same for each text field so the right content is displayed. Once done, click the Plus icon in the Server Behaviors and select 'Update Record'. Change the connection as shown above and make the page go to 'admin.php' after updating.



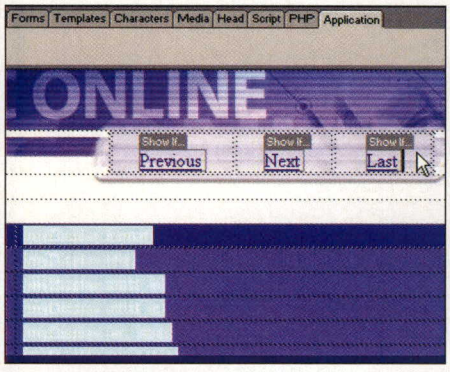
19 Add the background

Change the background colour of the first row to '#333399' and the rest to '#6666CC'. Click 'Bindings' in the Application panel and hit Plus to expand the recordset. Drag appropriate data across to match the column title to the left, except the image.



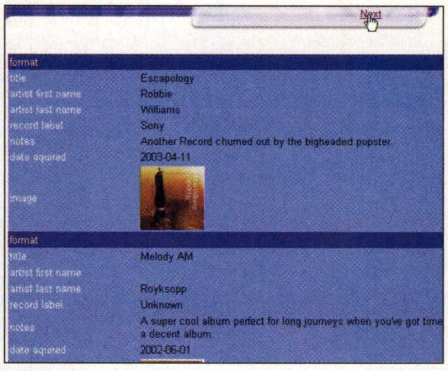
20 Add the image

Now select the cell next to the image and click on the Image icon. Click 'Data Sources' and select 'Image'. In the URL box add 'images/' before the PHP echo tag as shown. Click 'OK'. This will now display the dynamic image from each record in the database.



23 Amend the table

Your navigation should have arrived in a table. Select it and change the width to '100%' in the Properties palette; delete the space causing it to drop to the next line in the cell. Put your cursor in the first cell of the table and press 'CTRL + 'SHIFT' and '–'.



24 Final part

Select the last cell in the bar; hit 'CTRL', 'SHIFT' and '–' to delete. Select both remaining cells and change the text to 'Arial' size '2'. View the page at **http://localhost/index.php**. The content and navigation is dynamic to however many entries are in the database.

Jargon buster

Bindings

These are the data sources available to you from the database – therefore you are bound to these sources. The bindings themselves are just the field names available inside the selected table of choice within the recordset from the server.

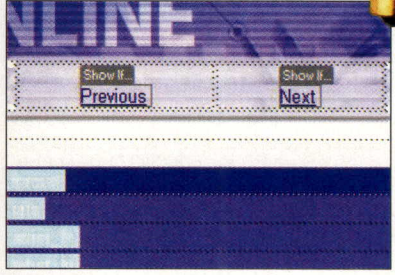
Recordset Navigation Bar

This produces a navigation system built upon the number of records available in the database. Simple 'next' and 'previous' links are available to move between the pages, and when there are a lot of pages you can also use the first and last links to navigate quickly to a particular link.

Local host

This points the Web browser to server software installed on the local machine as opposed to a site on the Web. In the first part of the tutorial we set up Apache to run locally on our computer as a test place for our online database.

Power users' tip



THE DYNAMIC MENU works in a very simple fashion. When large numbers of records are available we don't want to show all the records on one page at a time, as it would make the page very long and slow to load. Instead, on the Repeat Region we've limited the number of records to display to only two (keeping the page fast for loading), but we still want to see the other records. The Dynamic menu simply passes on in the URL the number of records that have been displayed, and loads the same page with new content. So with the index page, we have a page that will be dynamic while there's still content to be displayed.

In brief:
Task: Create a password-protected site with PHP and MySQL
Software I need: Notepad, Internet Browser, Web Host (with PHP and MySQL support), PHP 4+, MySQL
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 60 minutes

Build a password-protected Web site using PHP

BUILD YOUR OWN PASSWORD-PROTECTED WEB SITE AND TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF A NUMBER OF ADVANCED SECURITY TECHNIQUES USING PHP AND MYSQL

BUILDING A SECURE Web site requires you to use a number of technologies and techniques, many of which are forgotten by many Web developers. While creating a perfectly secure site may be impossible, it's certainly possible to create a site which will foil the efforts of the best crackers.

One of the best ways to ensure the security of your site is to set certain restrictions on the length and composition of the password the user selects.

The longer the password, the harder it will be to crack it. On the other hand, the longer the password, the harder it is to remember. Finding the right balance between ease of use and security is something that you'll need to decide for yourself. If the site contains sensitive content or access to key resources, more emphasis should be placed on security.

```
create database users;

use users;

create table accounts (
    id int unsigned not null auto_increment primary
    key,
    username char(20) not null,
    password char(20) not null,
              email char(100) not null );
```

1 Creating the user database

This is the code you will need in order to create the database that will store your users' details and allow them to log onto your site. You should access MySQL directly and type the above code into the command line (unless you feel you can create the above database using another method).

```
<html><head><title>Register</title></head>
<body><table><form action=' do_register.php'
    method=' post' >
<tr><td colspan=' 2' >Please fill in details
    below</td></tr>
<?
if ($err == 1) { echo "<tr class=' error' ><td
    colspan=' 2' >There has been an error with
    registration. Please ensure your username and
    password are the right length, that they use
    alphanumeric characters, that you have entered
    all required information and that your password
    confirmation matches your password.</td></tr>";
    }
?>
```

2 Registration page and error handling

Create a new file named 'registration.php'. This is where the user can register in order to gain access to your site, and is optional. The first part of our code checks to see if there has been an error in registration, outputting an error message. You can tailor your own error messages to individual errors, if you desire.

```
$username = $_POST[ "username"] ;
$password = crypt($_POST[ "password"] , $username);
$email = $_POST[ "email"] ;

$query = "INSERT INTO accounts (username, password,
    email) VALUES ('".$username."' , '".$pass-
    word."' , '".$email."' )";
mysql_query($query);

?>
<html><head><title>Registeration</title></head>
<body><p>Thank you for registering. <a
    href=' login.php' >Click here</a> to log in..</p>
</body></html>
```

5 Creating the account

We now get the details and insert them in the database before outputting a message telling them they're registered. Storing the user's password in unencrypted format is inadvisable, so we use the crypt() function to encrypt it. In this case we use the username as a seed for the crypt() function, but anything else can be used.

```
<html><head><title>Log In</title></head>
<body><table><form action=' do_login.php'
    method=' post' >
    <tr><td colspan=' 2' >Please Log In</td></tr> <?
if ($err == 1) { echo "<tr><td colspan=' 2' >There has
    been an error with your log in.</td></tr>"; }
    ?>
    <tr><td>Username</td>
    <td><input type=' text' name=' username' ></td></tr>
    <tr><td>Password</td>
    <td><input type=' password'
    name=' password' ></td></tr>
    <tr><td> </td>
    <td><button type=' submit' >Log
    in</button></td></tr> <?
if ($_GET[ "loc"] ) { echo "<input type=' hidden'
    name=' location' value=' ".$_GET[ "loc"] ."' >"; }
    ?>
    </form></table>
</body></html>
```

6 Getting the username and password

Create a new text file named 'login.php'. This is the main login page, and while the login form can be included elsewhere, this page should still be present in order to handle any errors that might be generated when users are logging in. The form takes the username and password; now send these to 'do_login.php'.

If the reverse is true, give the user more flexibility in deciding on his or her password.

It is also possible to restrict the user in so far as the format of the password is concerned. The best kind of passwords are those that combine alpha and numeric characters, and which use a relatively random combination of both. This makes cracking the password a lot harder, and is relatively easy to enforce by using regular expressions. In our script, we've only restricted the length of the passwords, but you should feel free to use any number of other restrictions if you think they are warranted.

This script uses PHP's crypt() function, which encrypts the password before it's stored on the Web site. This increases the security of the site substantially, and makes it almost impossible to work out a user's password, even if someone did manage to gain access to the database.

Once the crypt() function is used, it's almost impossible to reverse the procedure. However, if the same password and 'seed' are put through the crypt() function, it will result in the same encryption, allowing you to compare it with the password provided by the user.

The login script inserts a session cookie on the user's PC, allowing us to track their movements on our site. The cookie will time out after a certain period, forcing the user to log into the system again. Use the code below at the top of every page you wish to password protect in your site.

```
session_start();
if (!$_SESSION["id"]) {
      include("login.php");
      exit; }
```

This will check to make sure the cookie is present, and if not, will redirect the user to the login section of your Web site.

Jargon buster

SSL (Secure Socket Layer)

This script gives you a reasonable element of security, but other techniques should be used if this is an even higher priority than usual. SSL is designed to allow for secure exchange of data between client and server, and is used in a wide variety of secure transactions.

Encryption

Encryption means changing data into a format that can't be easily understood by unauthorised people. Decryption is converting it back into its previous format. There are different types and qualities of encryption and decryption. The basic principles have been used for many years, but in the digital age have become really useful.

```
<tr><td>Username</td>
<td><input type='text' name='username'></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan='2' style='font-
    size:4pt;'> </td></tr>
<tr><td>Password</td>
<td><input type='password'
    name='password'></td></tr>
<tr><td>Confirm Password</td>
<td><input type='password'
    name='password_conf'></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan='2' style='font-
    size:4pt;'> </td></tr>
<tr><td>Email address</td>
<td><input type='text' name='email'
    size='60'></td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>
<button type='submit'>Register</button></td></tr>
</form></table></body></html>
```

3 Getting user information

This is the form that requests information from the user in order to register them on the system. The only personal information we ask for here is the user's email address, but you can ask for whatever details you want from the user when you create your own registration page.

```
<?
$regUsername = "^[a-zA-Z0-9_.-]+$";
@ $db = mysql_pconnect();
mysql_select_db("users");
if (!$_POST["username"] || !$_POST["password"] ||
    !$_POST["password_conf"] || !$_POST["email"] ||
    !ereg($regUsername, $_POST["username"]) ||
    strlen($_POST["username"]) < 5 ||
    strlen($_POST["username"]) > 20 ||
    !ereg($regUsername, $_POST["password"]) ||
    strlen($_POST["password"]) < 5 ||
    strlen($_POST["password"]) > 20 || $_POST["pass-
    word"] != $_POST["password_conf"] ||
    mysql_num_rows(mysql_query("SELECT username FROM
    accounts WHERE username = '".$_POST["user-
    name"]."'"))) {
      $err = 1;
      include("register.php");
      exit; }
```

4 Checking user information

Create a new text file named 'do_register.php' which will handle the coding aspect of user registration. The first part of the code scours through the information provided by the user, checking its integrity and outputting an error if it doesn't meet certain criteria.

```
<?
    @ $db = mysql_pconnect();
    mysql_select_db("users");
    if (!$_POST["username"] || !$_POST["password"])
    {
      $err = 1;
      include("login.php");
      exit; }
    $result = mysql_query("SELECT * FROM accounts
    WHERE username = '".$_POST["username"]."' AND
    password = '".crypt($_POST["password"],
    $_POST["username"])."'");
    if (!mysql_num_rows($result)) {
            $err = 1;
            include("login.php");
            exit; }
```

7 Verifying the username and password

Create a new text file and call it 'do_login.php'. Once the user enters their password and username, it's sent to this script to deal with. The script checks that it's received a username and password, then checks that the username exists and the password is converted to an encrypted version using the username as a seed.

```
    $data = mysql_fetch_array($result);
    session_start();
    $_SESSION["id"] = $data["id"];
    $_SESSION["name"] = $data["name"];
    include("protected.php");
?>
```

8 Creating the session cookie

Once we've verified that the username and password are accurate, we can allow the user onto the site. To do this, we create a session cookie and insert the user's data into it, including their ID number and their name. We then forward them on to the protected part of the Web site.

In brief:
Task: Create a message board with ASP
Software I need: Server with ASP functionality, and a standard text editor
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 30 minutes

PART THREE

Furnish your site with a message board using ASP

THE THIRD PART OF OUR TUTORIAL ON BUILDING A MESSAGE BOARD WITH ASP SHOWS YOU HOW TO BUILD A SCRIPT THAT ALLOWS USERS TO POST MESSAGES

THE THIRD PART of our tutorial deals with the pages that allow users to post messages. In principle this is a relatively easy task, but as with any script that deals with user input, it requires us to be canny and create a script that will filter this content and pick out the sections that could cause problems (whether intentionally or otherwise).

We've already dealt with a number of topics in our tutorials – first of all demonstrating how to set up the database and create the default pages, and then creating the pages that allow users to view the forums and messages in those forums. If you've missed these, don't worry, you can always buy back issues (take a look at page 135). Next month we'll be showing you how to produce administration pages that will allow an administrator to create a new forum, delete old messages, and edit messages that already exist.

```
<html><head><title>Post Message</title></head>
<link rel=' stylesheet' type=' text/css'
    href=' css/global.css' >
<body><form action=' check_message.asp' method=' post' >
<input type=' hidden' name=' message_type'
    value=' <%=post_type%>' >
<input type=' hidden' name=' parent_id' value=' <%=par-
    ent_id%>' >
```

1 Posting the message

Create a new file, call it 'post.asp', and insert the above code. This code makes a form, creating two hidden fields recording the message type and the ID of the message or forum it will be attached to.

```
<table class=' tb' ><tr><td colspan=2>Name</td></tr>
<tr><td class=' tx' colspan=2>
<input type=' text' name=' from' size=' 40' ></td></tr>
    <tr><td class=' hd' id=' subject'
    colspan=2>Subject</td></tr>
    <tr><td class=' tx' colspan=2>
    <input type=' text' name=' subject' size=' 40'
    value=' ' ></td>
    </tr><tr><td class=' hd' id=' message'
    colspan=2>Message</td>
</tr><tr><td class=' hd' colspan=2>
    <textarea name=' message' cols=' 50'
    rows=' 20' ></textarea>
    </td></tr>
```

2 The input form

This is the form that allows the user to enter their message. If this is a membership account, it's recommended that you insert the username automatically. You can do this with **<input type='hidden' name='from' value='<%=username%>'>** where 'username' is equal to the user's username.

```
If Len(message_subject) > 200 Then
  Response.Write("The subject is too long.")
          Response.End
End If

If message_subject = "" Then
          Response.Write("You have not entered
a subject.")
          Response.End
End If

If message_body = "" Then
          Response.Write("You have not entered
a message.")
          Response.End
End If
```

5 Checking the data

Once we've got the data from the form, we need to check it to make sure it's what we want. We perform a number of checks on the data, and output error messages should this information be incorrect or absent. If you want, you can insert a number of other checks here.

```
Set Con = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
Con.Open "messageboardDB"

query = "INSERT INTO messages (message_type, mes-
    sage_from, message_subject, message_body, "

If message_type = "thread" Then
    query = query & "message_forum)"
Else
    query = query & "message_thread)"
End If
```

6 Open the database and create the query

Now we open our database, creating a connection using the 'Server.CreateObject' function. Once this is done, we start to build the SQL query we'll use to put the information into the database. We need to put different data into different parts of the table, depending on the message type.

Most of the complicated work has already been done in the table, and this script rounds off the public face of our message board system. It allows users to post new messages and reply to previous messages. This does, however, raise a number of issues.

Remember to filter

The problem with allowing users to post information that will be placed on a database is that they can pretty much post anything they fancy. This could include HTML tags and even ASP tags, as well as illegal characters. Unscrupulous or ignorant users can cause no end of problems for a developer in this manner, and this makes it vital that you filter any messages sent to your system so no illegal or inappropriate content makes it through to your SQL query. It's also possible to filter out inappropriate use of language, and block out certain words, but this is something we'll leave to your own ingenuity.

Our data needs to be structured in such a way that it can be easily identified as belonging to a particular forum or being a reply to a particular message thread. We do this using the parent message ID and message type variables that point out where the message should be located on our system. This information is used in last month's script in order to allow the user to browse around the system and pick out the messages that interest them.

Next month we'll be going on to the ins and outs of creating an administration application that will allow the message board administrator to control their creation and keep tabs of which messages go where. Without this, the message board will function but will be impossible to control without accessing the database directly.

Jargon buster

SQL

SQL stands for Structured Query Language and is used to query databases, retrieving, manipulating, deleting and creating info with a few lines of code. SQL has been adopted as an industry standard since 1986, and is supported by the majority or relational databases on the market (including Access, Oracle and Sybase).

Query

Queries are used in SQL to retrieve, update, delete, etc, the database you're working with. They usually come in the form of a string of text which contains a series of commands. In SQL, these commands are reasonably intuitive and make manipulating data easy and efficient.

```
    <tr><td id='back'>
<% If post_type = "thread" Then %>
<button onClick='gotoURL("view_forum.asp?id=
    <%=parent_id%>");'>Back</button>
    <% Else %>
<button onClick='gotoURL("view_message.asp?id=
    <%=Request("id")%>");'>Back</button>
    <% End If %>
    </td><td style='text-align:right;'>
    <button type='submit'>Post</button>
    </td></tr></table>
    </form></body>
</html>
```

3 The back and the post buttons

This part of our script detects where the user arrived from, and creates a 'back' button in case they decide against posting a message. It then creates a 'post' button, allowing the user to post the message once they have written it.

```
<%

    message_from = Replace(Request("from"), "'", "''")
    message_subject = Replace(Request("subject"), "'",
    "''")
    message_body = Replace(Request("message"), "'",
    "''")
    message_from = Replace(message_from, "<", "&#60;")
    message_subject = Replace(message_subject, "<",
    "&#60;")
    message_body = Replace(message_body, "<", "&#60;")
    message_type = Request("message_type")
    message_parent = Request("parent_id")
```

4 Getting the data and filtering it

Create a new text file named 'check_message.asp', and insert the above code. The first part of this code gets the form data, and filters it, removing any ' and < characters. If we did not do this, it could cause an error and possibly mess up our formatting.

```
query = query & " VALUES ('" & Ucase(message_type)
    & "', '" & message_from & "', '" & message_sub-
    ject & "', '" & message_body & "'" & ", " &
    message_parent & ")"

    Con.Execute query
```

7 Inserting the data

Once we've established the type of the message, we can finish building the SQL query and insert the data. We insert the data using the 'Con.Execute' function, which takes the query variable as an argument.

```
    Con.Close
    Set Con = Nothing

    If message_type = "thread" Then
Response.Redirect "view_forum.asp?id="&message_par-
    ent
    Else
Response.Redirect
    "view_message.asp?id="&message_parent
    End If

%>
```

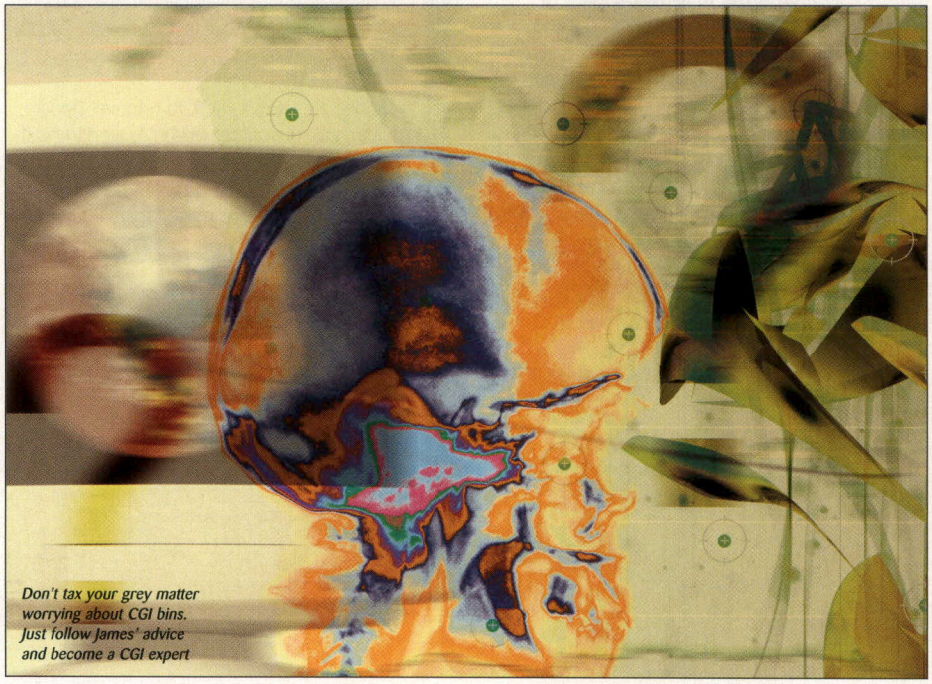
8 Taking the user back

Last but not least, we redirect the user to the page they came from (checking the 'message_type' variable to ensure we're sending them to the right place). Before we do this though, we close the connection and set it to equal 'Nothing'.

Q&A

Webmaster Q&A

JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK**



Don't tax your grey matter worrying about CGI bins. Just follow James' advice and become a CGI expert

CGI conundrum

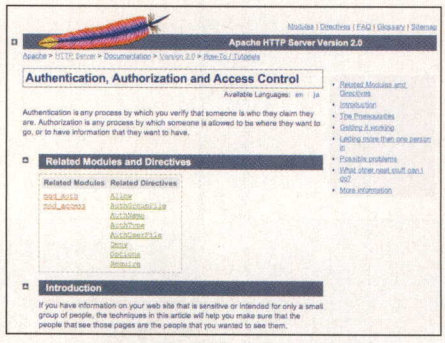
Q I have a little knowledge of computers and was asked to build a Web site for the Association of Ambulance Personnel in Ireland at **www.aoap.ie**. I am a bit puzzled about what purpose the cgi-bin serves on a Web server, and what sort of files are stored in this folder. Is it possible to create a login page that will search the cgi-bin so that registered users can access private areas on the site?

David Willis

A **CGI stands for Common Gateway Interface, which admittedly is not a very self-explanatory name. Basically the CGI allows you to provide interactive script-based content via your Web site.**

Unlike JavaScripts, which are handled by the visitor's browser, CGI scripts are executed server-side. As far as the visitor is concerned, they just receive a normal Web page. What has actually happened is that the Web page has been created by a script to include some kind of content specific to that visitor. In the case of a shopping site, lots of scripts may work together to guide the user through the purchase process. The most common day-to-day usage for a CGI script is when you look on a search engine.

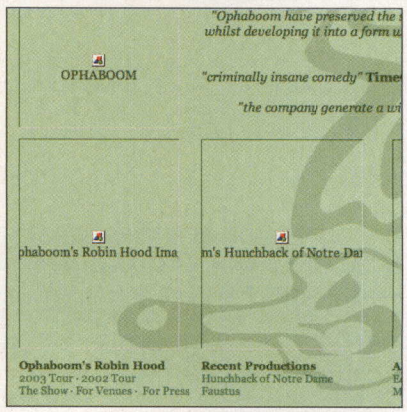
CGI scripts are normally stored in the cgi-bin folder, where they are recognised by your Web server as a script to be executed rather than just a normal Web page to be sent out as it is to the site visitor. The name of the folder can vary according to the way your Web server is set up, but its purpose remains the same. Your question suggests you don't quite understand the way that the CGI system works, as creating a private area on a site and searching the cgi-bin don't necessarily have anything in common.



The Apache site has a handy tutorial on how to implement password protection on your Web site

If you would like to restrict access to certain areas of the site by making users log in with a username and password, that is normally done by creating an '.htaccess' file, which doesn't have anything to do with CGI at all. Exactly how you configure password protection varies depending on your Web host's server type. The most common kind of Web server is Apache, and you can find guidance on how to use htaccess with it at http://httpd.apache.org/docs-2.0/howto/auth.html. Some Web hosts may even provide you with a friendly Control Panel-based method of setting up password protection, whereas others (especially free hosting providers) may not be equipped to provide any kind of password protection.

Reader's tip



*Web sites like this one at **ophaboom.com** work perfectly well with Image Downloading disabled – but can the same be said of your site? A quick fiddle in your browser preferences will reveal all*

Imagine without images

As someone who often has to access the Web over a slow mobile phone connection, I'm frequently frustrated by the lack of consideration many Webmasters give to people in my predicament. Generally I choose to turn off Image Downloading altogether, as the mobile connection is slow and the cost of being online very high. So many sites are just impossible to navigate without images, and in the interests of making my life easier I thought I'd write in and suggest that your readers who are designing pages try them out without images before putting them online. That is all!

Rosie Nightingal

Making backgrounds stick

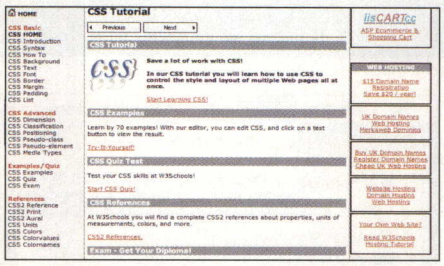
Q Although I've seen it done on various Web sites, I just can't work out what code to use to 'fix' a background image so that it stays in position when the page is scrolled down. Can you help me?

Lindsay Allen

A **To create this effect, you need to use CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) in a relatively straightforward way. This may have been frustrating your attempts to work out how it was done on other sites, as style sheet code is often stored in a separate file from the HTML of a page. But to make things simple, in this example the style sheet code is part of the page itself – just add the following code before the </head> tag on your page:**

```
<style type="text/css">
<!–
BODY {
background: white url("whatever.gif");
background-attachment: fixed;
}
//–>
</style>
```

The colour (white) and image name (whatever.gif) need to be changed to refer to your desired background image and the colour that should appear if the image fails to load. This is important to specify so people can read the text on the page if the image can't be shown for whatever reason. An excellent resource for learning more about CSS is available at www.w3schools.com/css. This site also features tutorials on HTML, XML and other technologies.



If in doubt about anything style sheet-related, take a look at the wonderful tutorial at ***www.w3schools.com/css***

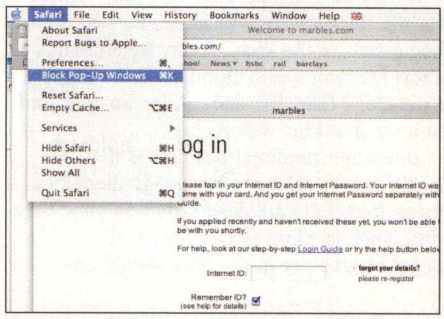
Prosper with pop-ups

Q I would like external links from my Web site, when clicked, to appear in a separate window. This way I've got more chance of keeping people in my site and them not getting lost! How do I do this?

Wallace Levy

A **Pop-up windows aren't really a surefire way of stopping users from getting lost – personally I find the sudden appearance of a new browser window quite disorienting. That warning out of the way, here's the code you'd use to make a link appear in a new window: Click here. You can also add the code <base target="_blank"> just before the </head> tag of your page to make all links generate new pop-up windows. By changing this to <base target="window1"> all links will go to the same new window. This is also used for dealing with links between frames, which may well be a better way to organise your site than to link into pop-up windows. In that instance, the 'Base Target' tag should refer to the name of the target frame instead. Frame names are defined in the frameset file.**

There are ways of making pop-up windows appear without a link being clicked, but I'm not going to tell you what they are, because that just makes for annoying Web design. Also, an increasing number of Web browsers offer their users a facility to block pop-up windows, and they are particularly harsh on those that appear automatically rather than as the result of a user's click.



Setting your links to appear in pop-up windows is a no-no, especially as most browsers now allow people to turn them off

Multiple meta madness

Q I'm always reading about the importance of inserting meta tags onto Web sites so that search engines can access them more easily. Does this mean that it's a good idea to put these tags on every page of my site or should I restrict it to the front page?

Noreen Michaels

A **The most important thing to remember if you're putting meta tags on each page of a site is not to use the same tag. Meta tags should be specific to each page, and obviously it can take quite a while to think up keywords and a description for each and every page you create for the Web. If tags are the same on multiple pages, some search engines may think you're trying a cheap trick to draw attention to your site.**

For uninitiated readers, meta tags contain information about a Web page that is invisible to the viewer of that page but is often used ➔

Readers' sites

Share your site with us – send the URL to **helpdesk@paragon.co.uk**

Jackson Hunter Baby Journal

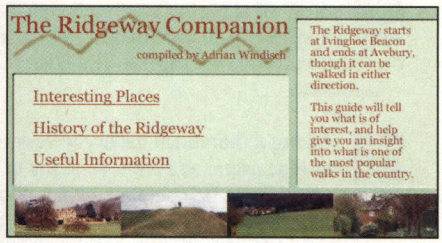
www.jacksonhunter.com

Sites that are little more than Web logs are all over the place, now that the likes of **www.blogger.com** have made it easy for anyone to commit their diary to the Web. Thankfully, Jackson Hunter's site rises above the average by including lots of great photos and supporting content, all laid out smartly.

Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group

www.hsnsg.org.uk

As well as providing a useful resource for anyone interested in the work of this support group, Jamie's site is really smartly designed, finding a very happy medium between looking corporate and being welcoming. The archives of photos from group events are a great touch.


The Ridgeway Companion
compiled by Adrian Windisch
Interesting Places
History of the Ridgeway
Useful Information
The Ridgeway starts at Ivinghoe Beacon and ends at Avebury, though it can be walked in either direction.
This guide will tell you what is of interest, and help give you an insight into what is one of the most popular walks in the country.

The Ridgeway Companion

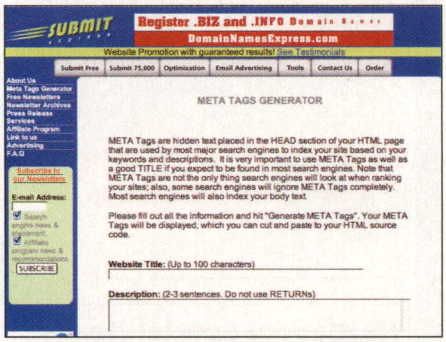
www.windisch.co.uk/ridgeway

We seem to have featured a disproportionately high number of sites about walking in these columns, but please rest assured we're not closet ramblers. This online guide to the Ridgeway is packed with links and a gorgeously coloured design, making it a pleasure to look around.

by search engines in collating information about the site. Using them can therefore help to improve search engine rankings – but only with some search tools some of the time.

Returning to the issue of where to put tags, it's probably best to just have meta tags on the main section pages of your site rather than every single page. Hopefully, search engines will then be more likely to send users to the main section pages rather than individual internal pages, which will enhance incoming site visitors' enjoyment of your site.

When writing the tag for each page, it is a good idea to have some general information about the site in both the description and keywords sections, rather than referring exclusively to the particular content of that page. This is because search engines may recommend any page on your site to a user, and will only use the meta tag from that particular page.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DomainNamesExpress.com
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META TAGS GENERATOR
Website Title: (Up to 100 characters)
Description: (2-3 sentences. Do not use RETURNs)

***SubmitExpress.com** not only helps you to make meta tags but also gives advice on what keywords to use in them*

If you're unsure about how to make a meta tag or what keywords to include in it, visit www.submitexpress.com/metatag.html for a helping hand.

Graphic grumbles

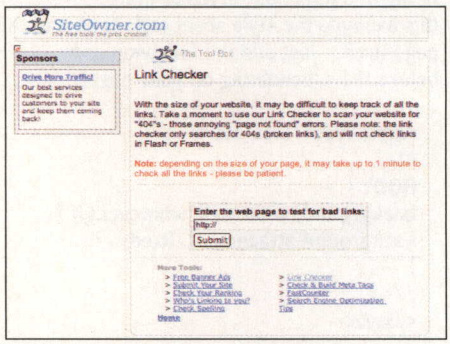
Q I'm having real trouble with images on my site. When I check the site by loading it into my Web browser from the hard drive, they appear without any problems. But when the page goes online they all just appear as white boxes with a cross in the corner. Any ideas on why this is happening?

David Santos

A **It's great that you've noticed this problem has happened, as far too many Web designers don't bother to check their site once it has gone online! The most likely explanation is that you have got the capitalisation of the image filenames wrong in your HTML source. You need to remember that most Web servers use an operating system that has case-sensitive filenames, meaning that IMAGE.JPG and image.jpg are seen as different files.**

It may be that you used very long names for the files, which have been shortened on being sent to the Web server. Try and stick to short filenames with standard three-letter extensions (like .jpg and .gif for images, and .htm or .html for Web pages).

One other potential problem is that the HTML source refers to the image filenames using their full path description on your hard disk, such as <img src="C:\My Web page\images\me.jpg">. This should be changed to <img src="images/me.jpg">, remembering to use forward instead of backward slashes. If the image is in the same directory as the HTML file, remove the 'images/' part of the tag. If you're not confident enough to manually alter the HTML, try using a Web-editing package, which will look after this automatically for you. Of course, sometimes it's possible to use such a package and still end up with broken links. That often happens if you start adding links before saving the page, which will make the editing package add local instead of relative links to your HTML code.


SiteOwner.com
Sponsors
Link Checker
With the size of your website, it may be difficult to keep track of all the links. Take a moment to use our Link Checker to scan your website for "404"s - those annoying "page not found" errors. Please note: the link checker only searches for 404s (broken links), and will not check links in Flash or Frames.
Note: depending on the size of your page, it may take up to 1 minute to check all the links - please be patient.
Enter the web page to test for bad links:
http://
Submit

*Check your site's links for free at the Siteowner site, **www.siteowner.com/badlinks.cfm***

Framed frustration

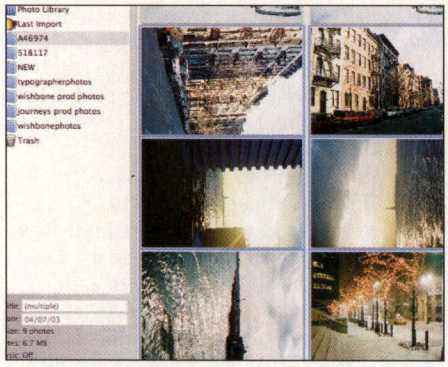
Q I registered and parked a domain with a hosting company, and have taken advantage of their forwarding service to make visitors to the domain see my home page. The page is actually stored on the free Web space provided by my ISP. The problem is that

Thumbnails and more

Q How can I make a page featuring thumbnails which will show the large version of the image when it's clicked on? I'm using a Mac and normally hand code my pages in Text Edit.

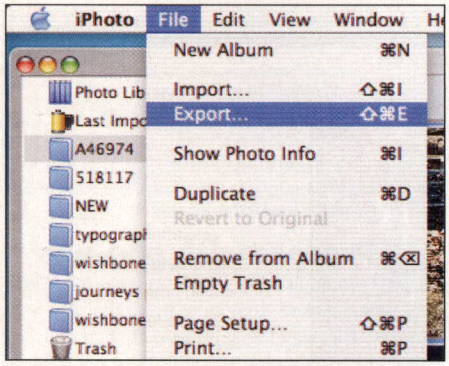
Sophie Muller

A **Making a thumbnail gallery is very easy for Mac users, as recent versions of the system software come complete with a photo management package called iPhoto which can generate thumbnail galleries and the pages needed to make them work. It will reduce the original image to thumbnail size, create a large version of the image and a page for it to appear on, and link these together. Similar packages are available for PCs: search for 'Web slideshow' at www.download.com to see options. The steps on the right show how to use iPhoto to make an online gallery, but you first need to import the images onto your machine and into iPhoto.**



1 Gallery selection

If you have more images on display in iPhoto than you want to feature in the thumbnail gallery, select the ones you want by clicking on the first one, holding down 'SHIFT' and clicking on the last. Or hold down the Apple key and click each individually.



2 Exporting the images

iPhoto can export images in different ways, with a Web gallery being just one of the options on offer. To start the process, select 'Export' from the File menu, and click on the 'Web' tab of the dialogue that appears.

however hard I try, it seems impossible to get listed properly on search engines. How can I resolve this?

Ben Marlowe

A **Unfortunately for you and many other site owners, most search engines really don't like framed Web pages. Although it looks like your Web site is not in a frame, that is an illusion created by the forwarding system. What actually happens is that the hosting company sends visitors to your site a Web page that tells their browser to fill its window with one frame. The source for this frame is your home page. There are two main problems created by this approach to Web site forwarding – firstly, the search engine one you mention, and secondly, a convenience issue for your visitors.**

Search engines sometimes ignore or get confused by framed Web pages, and often send visitors into individual sections of framed sites without realising. The other issue you'll come across is that search engines will generally record the actual URL of a Web page, which in the case of your site will be the free ISP address rather than your domain.

This isn't really a problem as long as you don't mind people seeing the less glamorous URL displayed on search engine results pages. If you want to get around it, you'll have to transfer your domain to a Web space provider and pay them to host it. Many domain registrars, including the popular www.uk2.net do offer such a service. Quite a few domain registration companies don't – in which case you'll need to transfer the domain to resolve the issue.

The second problem arises from the fact that however many links your users click to access different pages on your site, the original domain address will stay in the browser's address bar. This means they will not be able to save individual pages to their browser Favorites unless they right-click in the main frame rather than selecting 'Add to Favorites' from the main menu. This rather inconvenient situation will remain for the duration of that Web browsing session, even if they visit other Web sites, unless their browser comes across a command to break out of the frames.

Some registration companies, such as www.joker.com, do provide a more straightforward forwarding option that doesn't use frames but just forwards users from the domain to the source page – which neatly gets around both of the problems outlined above.

*More companies are now offering a forwarding system which doesn't rely on frames, including **www.joker.com***

Design doctor

Soulis

URL: www.soulis.co.uk
Creator: Baz

BAZ HAS CREATED a Web site which relies heavily on add-on Web technologies to make it work. This is not a problem in itself, but the way they have been implemented here brings up numerous issues that make the site less user friendly than it could be. As ever, the Design Doctor attempts to save the day in three easy steps.

Download doldrums

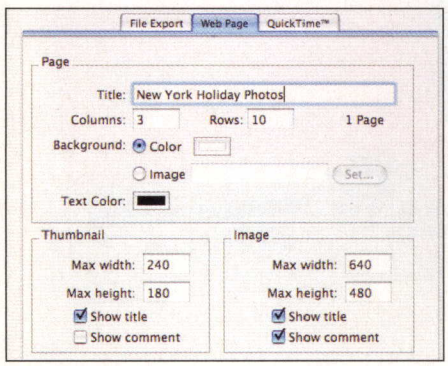
The way that Baz has created this Flash-based site means that all the content has to be downloaded before you can start looking around it. Unfortunately there's a lot to download, so unless you're using a broadband connection there's a very long wait before you can look at anything on the site. This needs urgent rethinking or the majority of visitors will give up at the first hurdle.

Empty categories

After all that time waiting for the download, it is rather crushing to discover that quite a few of the categories on the site don't have anything in them – not even an apologetic 'under construction' note. It would be far better to remove these categories altogether, rather than waste visitors' time.

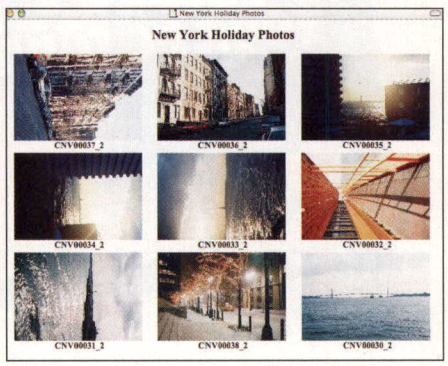
Mailto madness

If you want to provide a way for users to send a message from your Web site, it is best to avoid the 'mailto' method, as it relies upon the visitor having a correctly configured way of sending an email on the computer they're using. This isn't always the case – for example, if they're in a cybercafe or using someone else's machine. A better alternative is to provide a feedback form using Flash, or a free form service such as **www.formany.com**.



3 Configuring options

iPhoto is quite flexible, and there are plenty of export options, including the colour and title of the Web gallery pages, and the size and number of thumbnails to show on each page. The export process is quick, so try experimenting with settings.



4 Viewing the gallery

Click 'Export' to make the gallery, and make a new folder to store the files in. When the export is complete, find the gallery page in the new folder and double-click it to see the page in your browser. Repeat the first three steps if you're not happy with results.

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Once you've hit upon a style you can add content to the page with the greatest of ease. WebBuilder allows you to easily upload pictures and then add, delete and rename pages. In order to pull more punters to your site, you can also customise your page by choosing from a range of free add-ons such as links, a guestbook and site stats.

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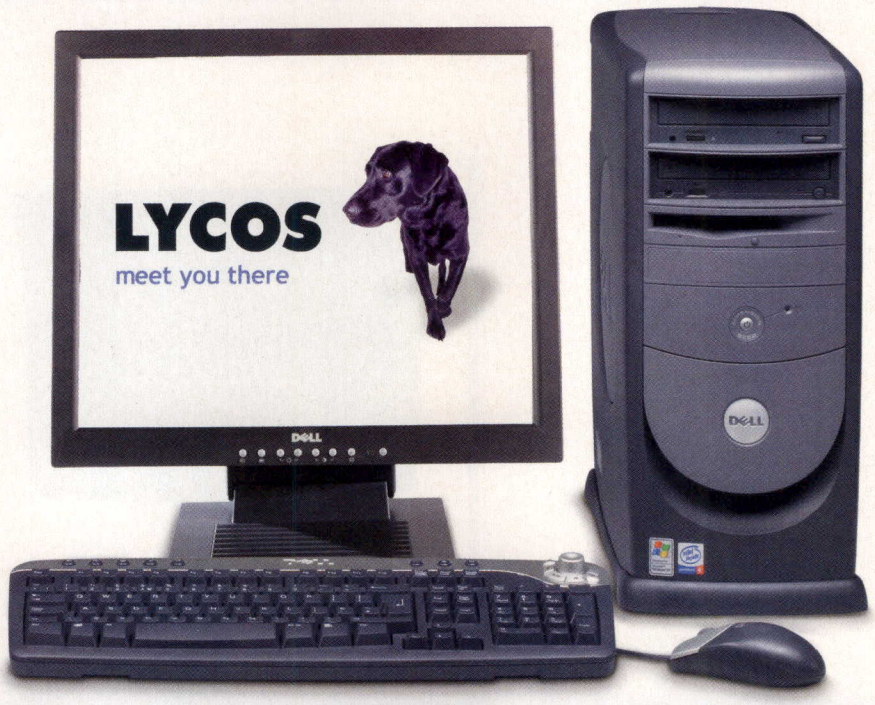
The grand prize

To help one lucky reader create their very own Web site, Lycos UK is offering the chance to win a top spec Dell PC and an Exilim digital camera. The 2.1 GHz Pentium 4 PC comes set in a stylish midnight grey tower and is worth £1,350. If your name comes out of the hat, you'll also scoop a stylish 2 Megapixel Casio Exilim digital camera to help you capture shots for your Tripod site.

*Research conducted by eMORI, April 2002



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The Internet

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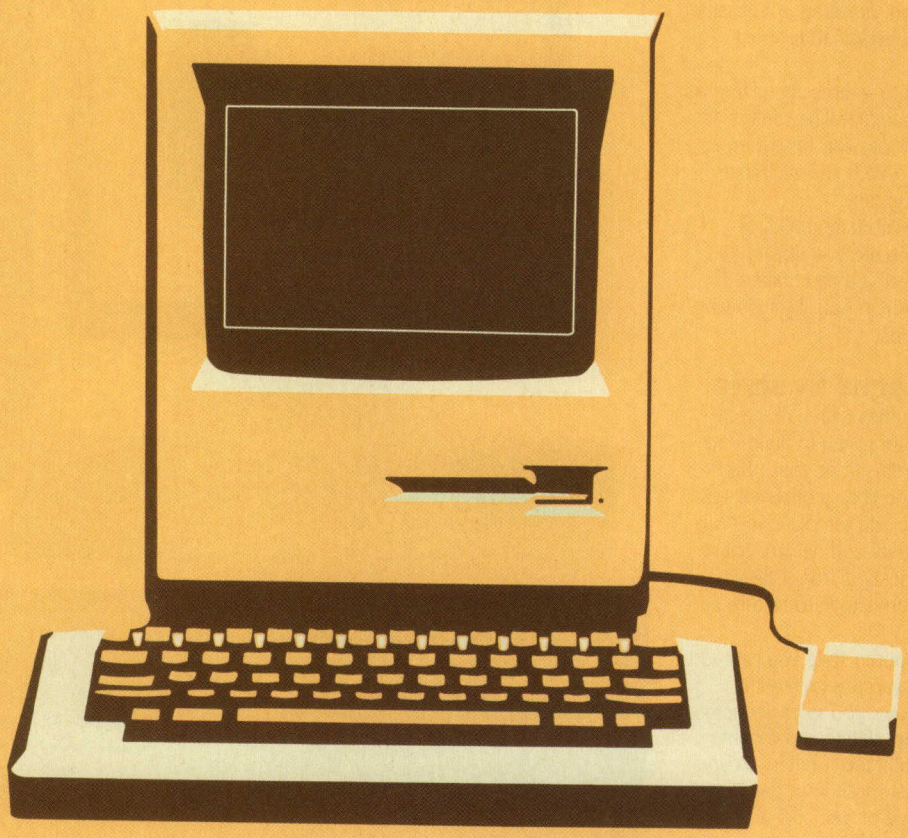

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Browsing

ESSENTIAL ADVICE ON GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR NET CONNECTION

WELCOME...

WHETHER YOU WERE a punk, a yuppie or a new romantic, there's no disputing the fact that the Eighties was an 'interesting' decade for music. It was perhaps the time when the pop idol phenomenon really exploded, with girls and boys across the land splashing their walls with pictures of Simon Le Bon, George Michael and Clare Grogan. This month, we've plundered the Web to dredge up the sites of some of the best artists of the Eighties for you to relive the crazy days when leg warmers looked good and Harry Enfield was actually funny.

There's nothing old-hat about the techniques covered in our browsing workshops though, as we show you how to stretch your Net connection to the limit whether it's doing incredible things with your email client or streamlining your bookmarks. We even show you how to set up your Webcam as a CCTV system so you can catch those smooth criminals red-handed.

James Thornton,
Features Editor

What's inside...

78 **Find it now: Eighties pop icons**
Relive the decade of silly haircuts with our guide to the top of the pop sites

80 **10 email tips**
Reach a higher level of email savvy by checking out our red hot tips

82 **Get a new window on the Web**
Change the way you surf for the better, using the 4C Vision browser

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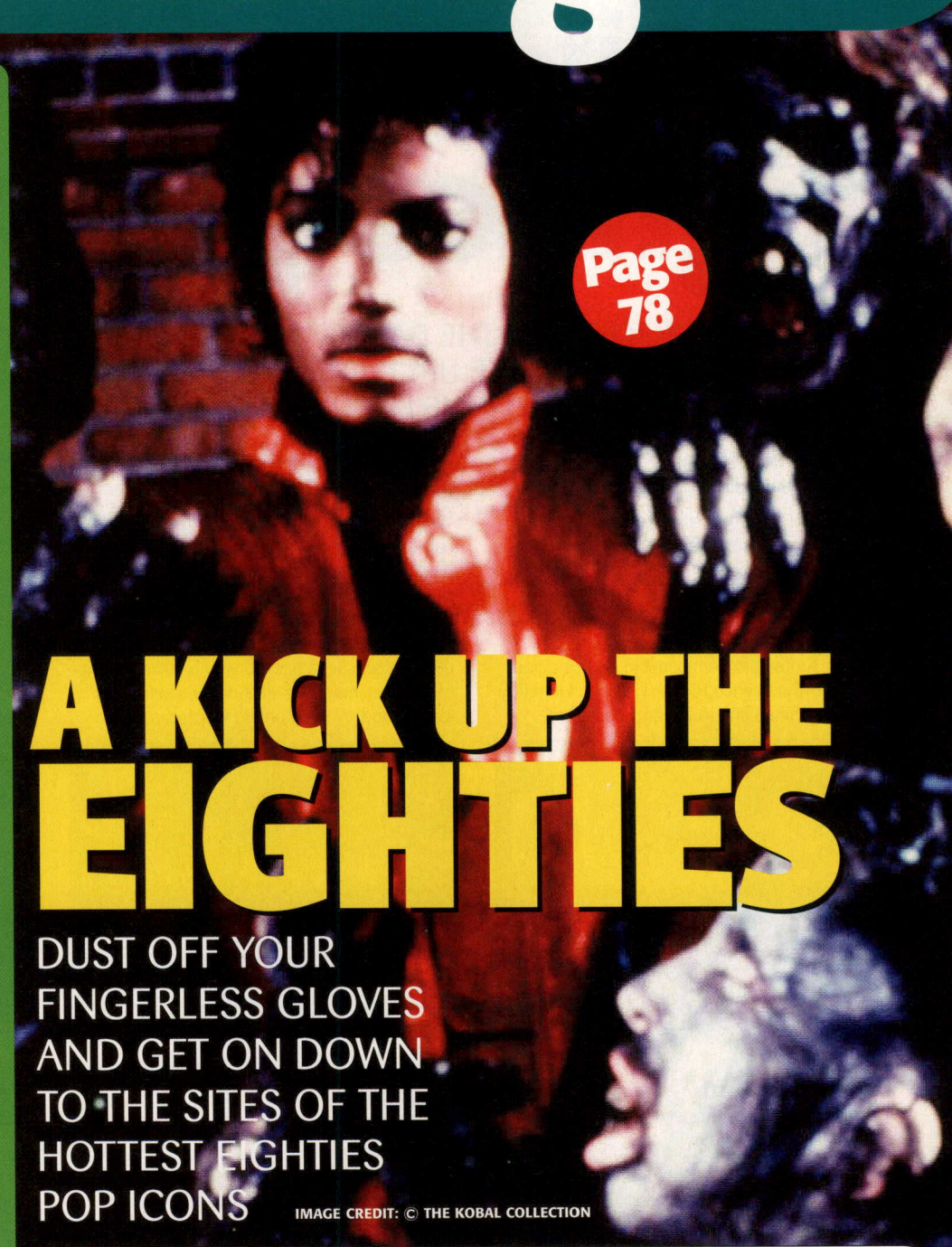

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A KICK UP THE EIGHTIES

DUST OFF YOUR FINGERLESS GLOVES AND GET ON DOWN TO THE SITES OF THE HOTTEST EIGHTIES POP ICONS

IMAGE CREDIT: © THE KOBAL COLLECTION

Other great guides in this month's section...

Discover how you can get more functionality out of your mail client by following our guide to some of the sneakiest email tips and tricks around

Earn yourself some extra peace of mind while you're away from the house by using a Webcam and a copy of Active WebCam from this month's CD to set up your own home surveillance system

Find it now:

Eighties pop icons

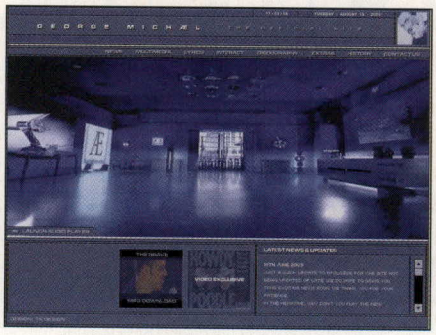
GOT THE URGE TO RELIVE THE DAYS OF STUPID HAIRCUTS, SPANDEX AND BLOKES PRANCING ABOUT IN MAKE-UP? WE TRAWL THE WEB TO UNEARTH SOME OF THE GREATEST SUPERSTARS OF THE EIGHTIES

1 Lionel Richie
www.lionelrichie.com

In a site described as his 'worldwide headquarters', Lionel Richie serves up a fascinating insight into his life as one of the world's smoothest crooners. Fans will find themselves dancing on the ceiling with delight at the wealth of news, photos, and info. As well as scores of downloadable goodies, you even get the chance to say 'Hello' to Lionel by dropping him a line to his email account.

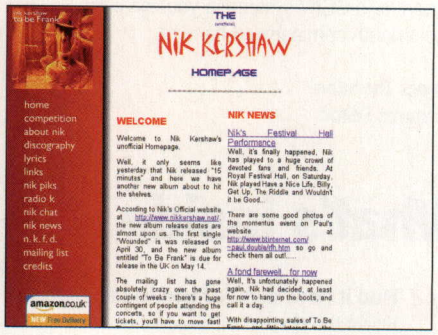
2 George Michael
www.georgemichael.com

With his tanned looks and dish-mop blonde hair-do, Georgios Panayiotou managed to earn himself pin-up status as the less-talented half of Wham! in the early Eighties. Since then, George has carved out a career as one of the biggest-selling solo acts on the planet and this ultra-stylish site is packed with a massive range of goodies including MP3 downloads, lyrics, forums and even an online wordsearch.



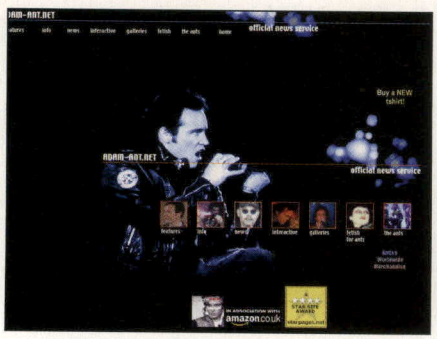
3 Nik Kershaw
www.kershaw.net

After springing onto our radios in 1983 with *I Won't Let The Sun Go Down On Me*, Nik became a firm fixture on girls' bedroom walls across the land. The pint-sized singer has now decided to hang up the mic but this unofficial site represents a fitting tribute. Besides song lyrics, pictures and chat, check out the 'About Nik' section, where you'll find dozens of useless pieces of information.



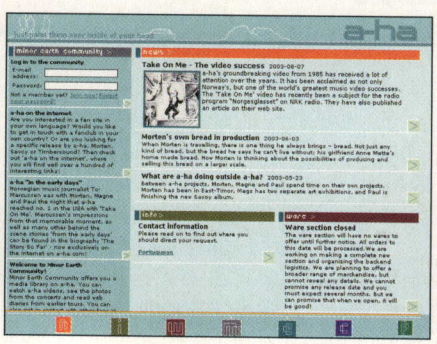
4 Adam Ant
www.adam-ant.net

Pop's original Prince Charming will always be remembered for his wacky outfits, elaborate stage act and over-stylised videos. This brilliant official site will keep Ant fanatics happy for hours, with facts, news and galleries. Hardcore fans will also love the 'Fetish for Antz' section, which charts the underground days of Mr Ant's formative years.



5 A-ha
www.a-ha.com

This Norwegian trio reckoned that the sun always shined on TV, but these days the brooding Scandinavians would surely agree that it also beams onto the Web. These official fan pages are stacked with all the latest A-ha gossip, along with the startling revelation that Morten is now "thinking about producing and selling his bread on a larger scale".


a-ha
Take On Me - The video success
Morten's own bread in production
What are a-ha doing outside a-ha?
Contact information
Ware section closed

6 Boy George
www.boy.george.net

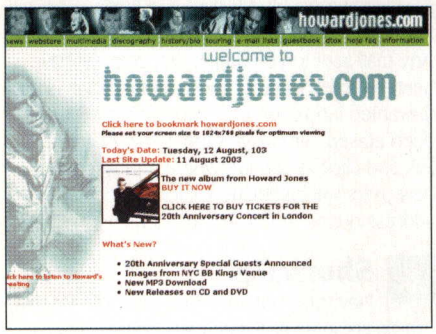
He caused a right royral rumpus when he burst onto the scene in the early 1980s, but there's no disputing that the boy Boy was one of the greatest trendsetters of his time. Prompting a generation to don wigs and mascara, the Culture Club singer is an icon for millions, including the creator of this site. If you only visit one section, make sure it's the 'Look-A-Likes'.

Boy George - The Devil In Sister George Homepage
BOY GEORGE
THE DEVIL IN SISTER GEORGE HOMEPAGE
dj, singer, right-on sister
TABOO
Latest news:
The very latest pictures of 'The Twin' performing at the ICA Thursday the 7th. We were there with our camera. Special thanks to Pepe Silva for all the pictures and welcome to the DISG staff! You will be rewarded.
» Gallery -> The Twin at ICA!

"George earned himself pin-up status as the less-talented half of Wham!"

7 Howard Jones
www.howardjones.com

Following a string of early Eighties hits, Howard ironically released a track called *Things Can Only Get Better* in 1985, after which his success dried up. Undeterred, he carried on making music and is celebrating his twentieth anniversary with a gig at the Shepherd's Bush Empire. His Web site is one of the slickest of anyone from his era and contains a good selection of information.

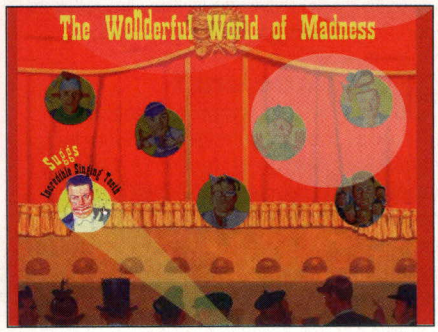

howardjones.com
welcome to
howardjones.com
Click here to bookmark howardjones.com
Today's Date: Tuesday, 12 August, 103
Last Site Update: 11 August 2003
The new album from Howard Jones
BUY IT NOW
CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS FOR THE 20th Anniversary Concert in London
What's New?
• 20th Anniversary Special Guests Announced
• Images from NYC BB Kings Venue
• New MP3 Download
• New Releases on CD and DVD

8 Frankie Goes To Hollywood
www.fgth.org.uk

When Frankie said 'Relax' back in 1984, Radio One DJ Mike Read famously did exactly the opposite and flipped his lid, refusing to play the record and causing it to get banned from the station entirely. This amazing site chronicles the story of Frankie, providing a healthy array of free features along the way such as music and video downloads.

9 Madness
www.madness.co.uk

Proving that the lads in baggy trousers are still crazy after all these years, this glorious Flash-based site offers all manner of light relief from mainstream, everyday life. From its circus-themed intro to its Pac-Man-style game and wacky animations, the official Madness site provides a highly original way of finding out more about Suggs, Barzo, Woody, Chas Smash, Chrissy Boy, Thommo and Bedders.



10 Michael Jackson
www.michaeljackson.com

Whatever opinions you may harbour about his face, his strange ways or his unusually high voice, there's no disputing Michael Jackson's position as the King of Pop. You'd be very hard pushed to find someone on the planet that won't admit to liking at least one of his tunes, and it was during the Eighties that Michael shone the brightest, with the release of the timeless *Thriller* and *Bad* albums. He's moved on a bit from dancing around in graveyards, and far from being filled with pictures of Bubbles and other chums, Michael's official site is a classy affair with a stylish navigation menu and plenty of arty shots of Jacko assuming typical poses. However, the best thing about the site is the same as the best thing about Michael – the music. You'll find all the classic videos available for streaming in QuickTime format, plus you can stream audio tracks from his most recent album, *Invincible*. Shamon!

Ten email tips

IF YOU'RE SUFFERING FROM AN IRRITABLE INBOX OR YOUR POP SERVER'S JUST POPPED OUT, HIT THE FAST TRACK TO EMAIL BLISS WITH OUR TEN TIPS

1 Run for it

A little-known but flashy email trick: if you want a quick way to open your email client for sending a new message, don't do it the conventional way. On the Windows Start menu – any version will do – click the often-ignored 'Run' command. This is usually reserved for rapidly browsing disks or launching program executables, but works in some ways like a traditional DOS prompt too. In the textbox simply enter 'mailto:' followed by the email address of your chosen recipient. Hit 'Enter' or click 'OK' and the next thing you see should be your default client with a brand new message waiting to go. You can also try the same trick in your browser address bar for extra kudos.

2 Don't be draft

If you've ever composed a sensitive message to someone and then hit 'Send' by mistake you could be left red-faced. Avoid any potential embarrassment by addressing a new message to yourself or leave the Recipient box blank. This way you can draft what you want to say until completely happy, safe in the knowledge that accidentally posting it won't end in crisis. You'll simply either get a copy of what you've forwarded or the client will prompt you for a valid address. Take a look at our feature on email horrors this issue and then realise just how much misery you could be avoiding with this really simple tip.

3 Web mail

Accessing your Web-based email can be performed by Outlook Express. For example, for a Hotmail account, select 'Tools' and 'Accounts' from the Outlooks menu, and click 'Add' then 'Mail'. In the dialog enter your name and click 'Next', then enter your Hotmail address and hit 'Next' again. On the next screen select 'HTTP' from the first list box and 'Hotmail' from the second before clicking 'Next'. You're asked to enter your email address again under 'Account Name', and your Hotmail password. Ensure the 'Remember Password' box is checked before clicking 'Next' and 'Finish'. Now close the Accounts window and hit 'Yes' to have Outlook Express download the Hotmail folders list.

4 Spam off

Wouldn't it be good if you could eradicate the annoying spam that clutters up your inbox? Well you can in Outlook Express, but it takes a few simple clicks to have them barred for good. Highlight an email in the main pane and click 'Message' on the client's main menu bar. Select 'Block Sender…'. from the drop-down menu and you should see a prompt confirming the message has been blacklisted. Every new email from that specified address will automatically be placed in the Deleted Items folder. This needs to be done for each message that comes from a different source address, but is probably more effective than checking for subject phrases etc. If you find you want to unblock certain addresses, select 'Tools' from the menu and 'Message Rules'. Hit 'Mail' and the block list will appear for you to remove entries.

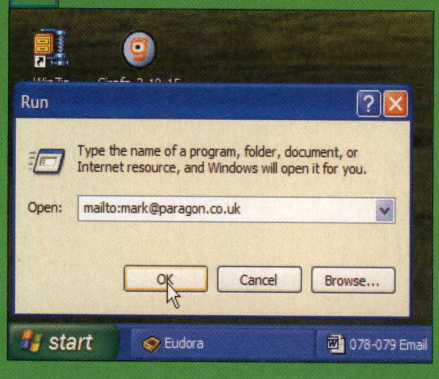
5 Close Hotmail

The unwanted emails you can end up with when using Hotmail can be frustrating. Companies send out reams of annoying promotional messages, so give them the brush-off by closing your account. You may be set to go away for a long break or whatever, but by closing your account you will prevent more junk from being delivered while you're away. As long as you return within 90 days and log in once more, the account will be reactivated as before. Any mail sent to you during that time will have been returned to sender with an error, while any unwanted inbox contents and folders will have been erased. Simply visit the 'Close Account' link and click to confirm where prompted. No new users will be able to snatch your email address during the 90-day period.

6 Shortcuts

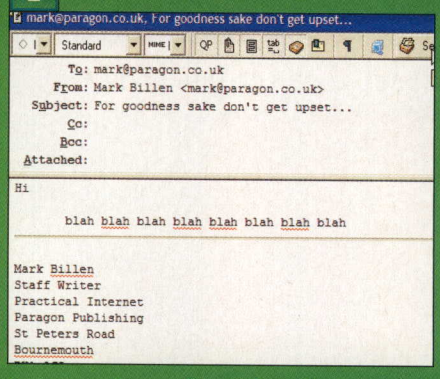
Navigating Outlook Express's interface can be tiresome and time-consuming with just the mouse. Luckily there's a bevy of keyboard shortcuts that provide a quick method of accessing the various functions. Sending and receiving all messages can easily be performed by hitting 'CTRL' + 'M' simultaneously, while a

1



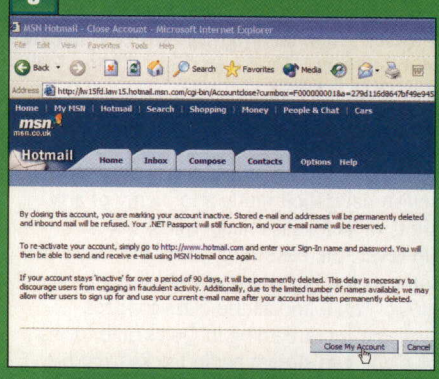
The Run command and address bar can yield interesting shortcuts

2



Sending an email to yourself by mistake could save your skin

5



Closing Hotmail may be drastic but can effectively ditch spam

similar combination of CTRL+N will begin a new email. You can use CTRL+SHIFT+Bto open the address book, with CTRL+R for replying and CTRL+F for forwarding. If you want to you can jump to the next unread message in your mailbox by trying CTRL+U. In the Message window have a go at using the handy F7 key to check spelling, CTRL+Z for undoing a mistake and CTRL+S to save the draft. With that many shortcuts you'll soon have your emails flying!

7 Auto reply

One of the neatest features of Outlook Express is the ability to set rules for the way the client responds to certain things. This is usually most useful when receiving messages to your inbox, where certain filters can be applied to delete emails or route them into different folders. It's all done via the 'Message Rules' utility and you can even set the program to automatically reply to emails in your absence. Start by composing your reply as normal and then select 'Save as…' from the File menu to store. Create a new mail rule by clicking 'Tools', 'Message Rules' and then 'Mail'. In the following dialog set the conditions for the rule in the first box and select 'Reply with message' in the second. Click the blue link below to locate your stored reply, giving the new rule a name and clicking 'OK' to finish.

8 Keep a copy

Ever wondered whether it's possible to download an email twice from the same account? You may wish to check for messages in one place but retrieve the very same emails somewhere else, for instance. Outlook Express enables you to set your account to leave message copies on the server to grab again later. Click 'Tools' and 'Accounts' to open the Internet Accounts dialog. Select the 'Mail' tab, making sure your default account is highlighted before clicking the 'Properties' button. On the next dialog pick the 'Advanced' tab and within the Delivery section where it reads 'Leave a copy of messages on server' check the box. Two additional boxes will then be lit up for specifying the duration of time they should remain. You can either set a number of days or when the messages have been deleted before clicking 'Apply' to confirm the changes.

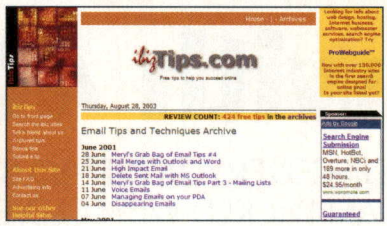
9 Data transfer

With life today somewhat busy, portability of data is increasingly necessary. The limited capacity of floppy disks has been replaced by minuscule USB drives and even CDs, but there is another option. If you don't happen to have any additional storage devices to hand and want to perhaps shift information between home and work, use email. Often this is obvious but easily ignored, so get into the habit of posting data with attachments. Sending messages to your own universally accessible Web mail is particularly useful and uploading your files to a mail server this way is a clever idea. You can then switch machines and retrieve all the attachments – preferably in zipped format to save bandwidth – and away you go!

10 Signing off

Adding a signature can be an effective touch for all personal and professional messages. You might want friends or correspondents to be able to contact you in different ways, so adding addresses or phone numbers is traditional. It may also be appropriate to suggest additional email accounts that people can reach you with, or alternatively add company disclaimers and favourite quotes. This can be done easily within most clients, although Outlook Express is particularly simple. Click 'Tools' on the menu and then 'Options' to view a tabbed dialog. Select 'Signatures' and hit 'New' to enter your signature text. Here you can also specify a file you'd rather use like a business card, and can set the client to add the signature to each new message.

Email bookmarks



iBizTips

www.ibiztips.com/email_archive.htm

This lengthy archive of email tips covers a huge range of different topics from PDA messaging, mail merging with Outlook Express to general advice on spam. All are listed chronologically and new postings are frequently available, providing you with a highly useful and detailed resource.

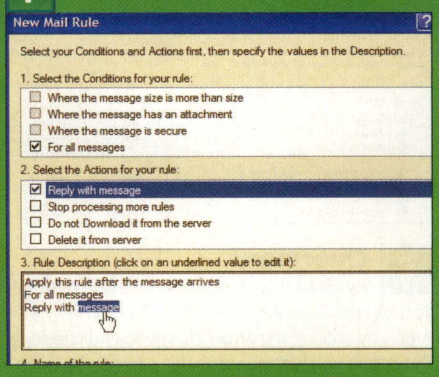
321.net
Teaching readers that e-mail is much more than just sending a message.
EVERYTHING E-MAIL
Welcome to Everything E-Mail ®.

Everything Email

everythingemail.net

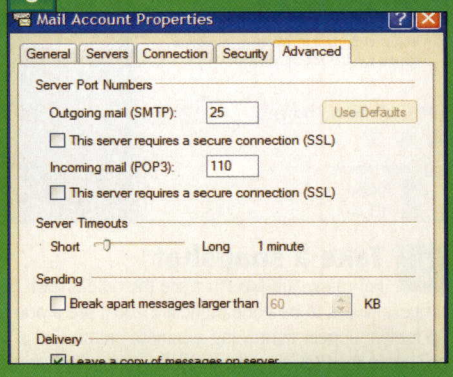
If you're looking for a site that will not only provide handy hints but a wealth of resources too, try Everything Email. The site offers an impressive number of downloadable email programs, a glossary of slang terms and a great facility for locating addresses.

7


New Mail Rule
Select your Conditions and Actions first, then specify the values in the Description.
1. Select the Conditions for your rule:
Where the message size is more than size
Where the message has an attachment
Where the message is secure
For all messages
2. Select the Actions for your rule:
Reply with message
Stop processing more rules
Do not Download it from the server
Delete it from server
3. Rule Description (click on an underlined value to edit it):
Apply this rule after the message arrives
For all messages
Reply with message

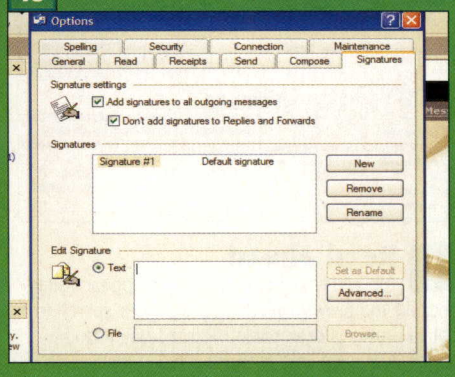
Setting rules like the Automated Reply feature can help immensely

8



Leaving emails on the server enables you to retrieve them later

10



Rubber stamping messages with a signature adds a personal touch

In brief:
Task: Using 4C Vision 3.0
Software I need: 4C Vision 3.0
Difficulty: Extremely easy
Time I need: Allow at least 10 minutes

Learn to browse with 4C Vision 3.0

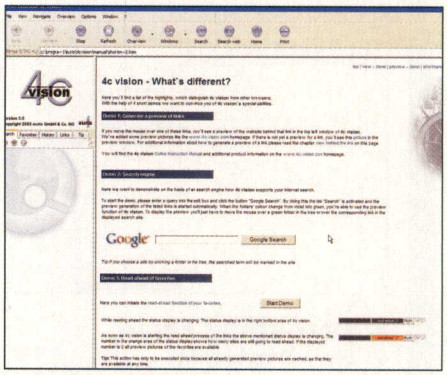
Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

DISCOVER A ROUTE TO BETTER BROWSING WITH AN INNOVATIVE ALTERNATIVE THAT'S SO JAM-PACKED WITH CLEVER FEATURES YOU'LL WONDER HOW YOU COPED WITHOUT IT

YOU MIGHT BE wondering why anyone would want to take the time to swap browsers. Surely they all do pretty much the basic task of finding a specified site and displaying it, right? Very true, and apart from the additional functionality of being able to create bookmarks, go back and forth and perhaps store files locally, there's not much between them.

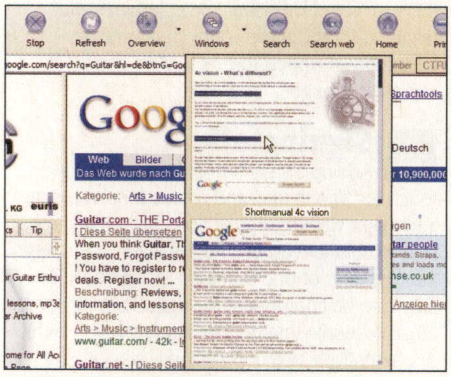
However, you may be interested to know that, Netscape and IE aside, there are some excellent and exciting browsers available. 4C Vision 3.0 is a prime example and proves that developers are still willing to evolve established software. It's full of ingenious but simple ideas that will amaze you. The big difference is its concept of visual surfing – thought to be a more natural mode for us humans. Apparently we're more likely to find what we want by actually looking, and have more success building associations with sites from visual cues.

4C Vision 'reads ahead' of your Net navigation to provide thumbnail previews of potential links. It also connects to chosen search engines and creates thumbnails of all the results – making bad links a thing of the past.



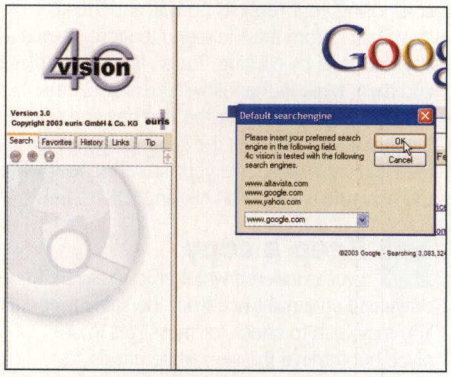
1 Start me up

When you first use 4C Vision you'll see a page or 'Shortmanual' outlining its many features. You can use the step-by-step guide to talk you through what's available, and demo the various functions using the labelled buttons.



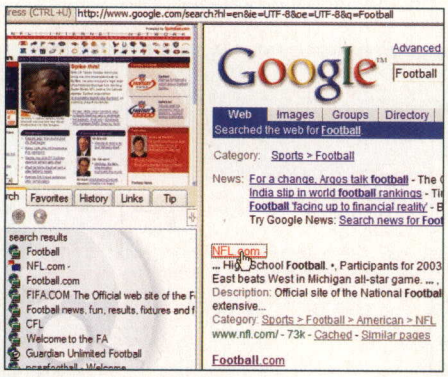
2 Browse the Web

You need to provide a default search engine for the browser during installation, although this can be changed by clicking 'Options' and 'Default Search Engine' on the window menu. Clicking 'Search Web' on the dashboard will then launch this site.



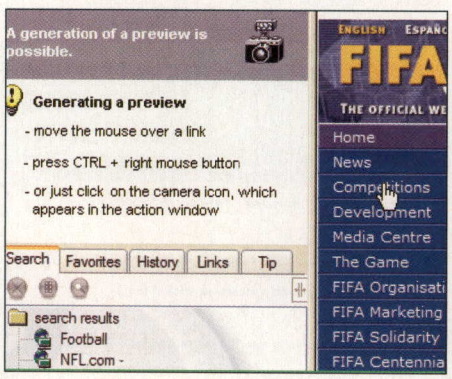
3 Your results

After submitting a keyword the Results page is displayed as normal, but the corresponding links are also shown in the panel on the left. This allows you to navigate between each one without returning to your search engine.



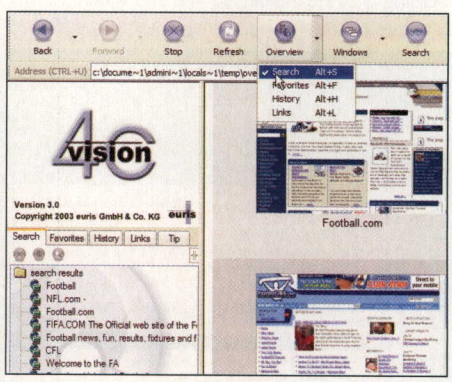
4 Read ahead

All valid links in the Results list appear visited because the browser reads ahead of your search to obtain previews of possible URLs. As you flick the cursor over each link, or those listed in the Search panel, an image of the page is shown in the corner.



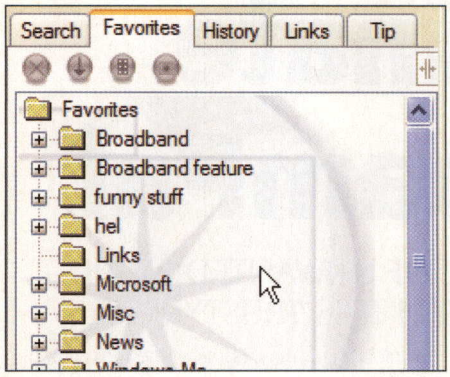
5 Take a snapshot

For many sub-links in a site the read ahead process needs to be done manually. You'll see a pop-up toolbar appear containing a camera button and a prompt in the Preview pane to click. Press 'CTRL' and the right mouse button to achieve the same thing.



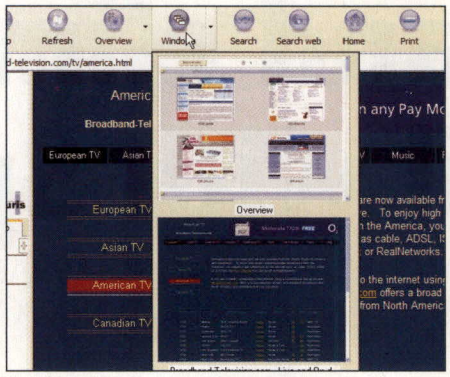
6 Overview

By clicking 'Overview' on the main dashboard you can preview all links at once. Drop down the menu by clicking the arrow alongside and checking the option you wish to view. This can also be done via the second round button on the Search panel.



7 Missing link

The Links panel has five tabbed sections for various lists of pages. Click the 'Favorites' or 'History' tabs to view bookmarks and browsing records. The 'Links' tab shows you a sitemap of pages from the one currently loaded.



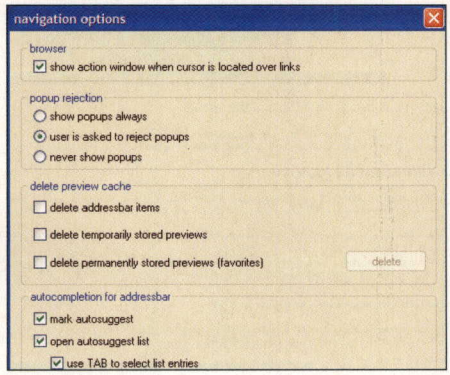
8 Too many windows

Using multiple instances of 4C Vision is not a problem thanks to a neat little built-in feature. Clicking the 'Windows' button gives you a set of selectable thumbnails for displaying the contents of all others running.

BBC NEWS UK EDITION
Last Updated: Friday, 1 August, 2003, 13:36 GMT 14:36 UK
E-mail this to a friend
Printable version
Blair to face
Search
Please enter your query:
the
Your query was found 75 times.
Lord Hutton began by telling a packed court room that the inquiry had been prompted by a "very tragic death" and that it would be fitting to stand for a minute's silence.
The senior judge spent the first 35 minutes of the session

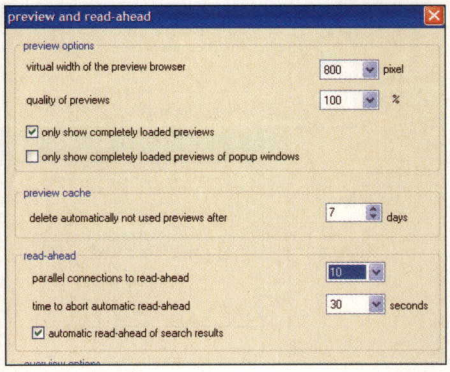
9 Word search

The difference between the 'Search Web' and 'Search' dashboard buttons is that one loads your online search engine while the other locates page text. The latter is useful for research purposes and will highlight your keyword for easy identification.



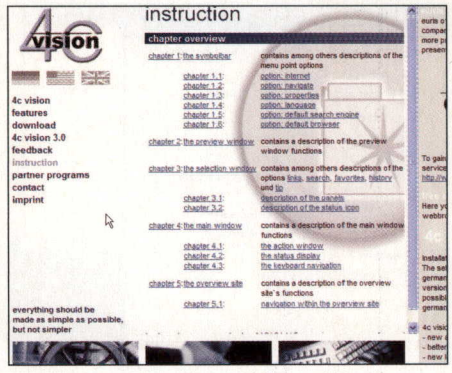
10 Navigate

Selecting 'Options' from the window menu gives you a selection of areas to tweak. Hit 'Navigate' to alter settings for pop-up blocking and the deletion of previews. You can also alter the way the address bar's Autosuggest facility behaves before clicking 'OK'.



11 Properties

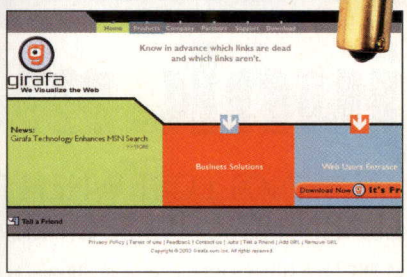
The Properties dialog contains parameters for previewing and reading ahead. You may set the width of the preview browser and quality of the thumbnails. The cache can also be set to delete, and the number of read ahead processes and previews can be limited.



12 Help at hand

An online manual solving the most common problems with 4C Vision is also available. To access click the question mark symbol on the main menu and select 'Online Support'. You will then be presented with a page of links to various troubleshooting topics.

Web resources



Girafa

www.girafa.com

If you're taken with the ability to see links before you click on them, you might fancy a gander at Girafa, which is a rather fetching program that lets you view thumbnails of your search results. It's like Google with binoculars.

Download.com

www.download.com

If you've been surprised by how good 4C Vision is, why not try finding other great downloadable applications floating about the Web? Download.com is probably the best bet for picking up little-known but incredibly effective programs, many of them completely free.

Jargon buster

URL

This popular acronym stands for Uniform Resource Locator, which Web pages or files use to globally identify themselves on the Net. It's split into two main sections, with the first specifying which protocol must be used to retrieve the file. For example 'http://' signifies that the Hypertext Transfer Protocol should be invoked for typically acquiring a Web page, whereas 'ftp://' suggests that a file or executable should be fetched using the File Transfer Protocol. This isn't something you normally need worry about as browsers tend to know what's necessary, but you do need to be sure about the second part. This is where the IP address or domain name sits, which points to where the resource can be found.

In brief:
Task: Eradicate spam from your life with SpamPal
Software I need: SpamPal
Difficulty: Really simple
Time I need: 10 minutes max

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

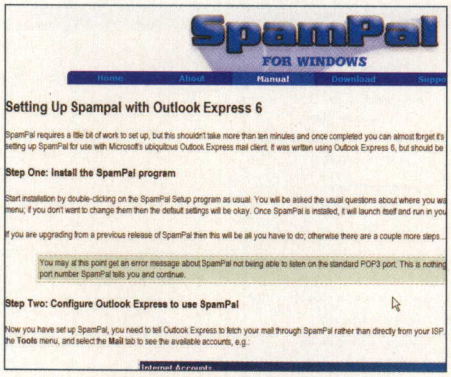
Identify and eliminate junk mail with SpamPal

ALL IS NOT LOST WHEN IT COMES TO FILTERING A BARRAGE OF UNWANTED EMAIL – LEARN HOW TO SPOT SPAM AS IT LANDS IN YOUR INBOX WITH THIS TRUSTY TOOL

MOST NET USERS focus on protecting themselves against virus attacks, but these days there are even more tangible threats to consider. The onslaught of spurious corporate or hoax emails, otherwise known as 'spam', has become a serious worry for individual users or companies who find their inboxes and network traffic jammed. Those who can't see why there's so much fuss over a bit of spam fail to fully appreciate the problem. To most, it's the online equivalent of getting home and finding an answer machine full of XXX porn adverts. It's a problem, but just like the intensely irritating phenomena of pop-ups, it can be taken care of. A whole stack of pocket-sized applications are floating about the Web and available for download right now. Some of the most notable sailed the charts of last issue's '50 Net timesavers' feature and SpamPal is a prime example. Once installed, it simply runs in the background with little more than an umbrella icon in the System Tray. From here you can set up a range of options quickly and easily, which we'll be examining here.

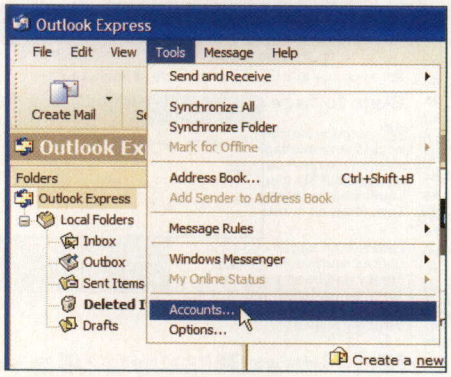
1 Once installed

Following successful installation, SpamPal will immediately run. It indicates its presence by adding a pink umbrella icon to the System Tray. Use this to open a menu with options for enabling or disabling, exiting and setting properties.


SpamPal
FOR WINDOWS
Setting Up Spampal with Outlook Express 6
Step One: Install the SpamPal program
Step Two: Configure Outlook Express to use SpamPal

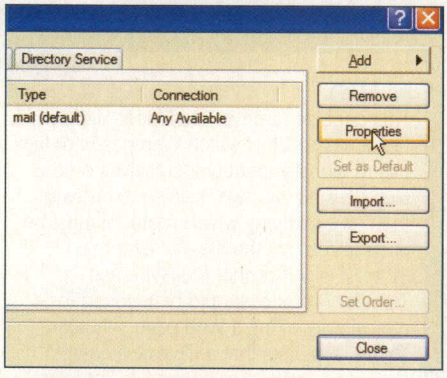
2 Configure your client

Unfortunately SpamPal won't work until you configure your email client to check your inbox through it. You can find instructions for how to do this for most clients on the Web site, although here we'll show how to set up Outlook Express.



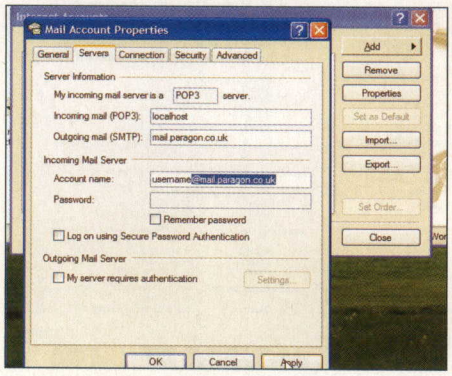
3 Your accounts

You need to tweak several settings to start filtering, so be sure to make a note of what they are. Open up Outlook Express and click the 'Tools' item on the main menu. Select 'Accounts' and you should see a dialog profiling all available accounts.



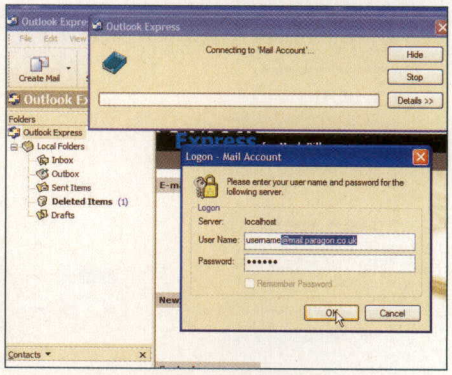
4 Account properties

From the Accounts dialog, select the 'Mail' tab, making sure that the main or default account is highlighted. Next click the 'Properties' button to open a tabbed dialog listing various settings and select the 'Servers' tab to continue.



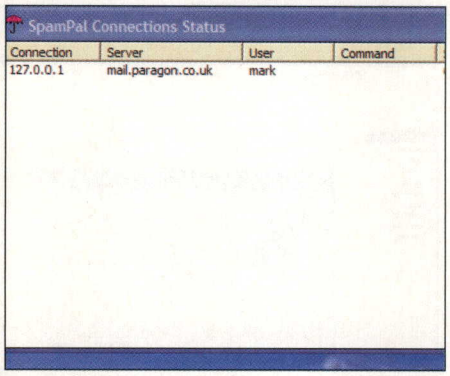
5 All change

Most settings are fine, but there are a few changes to make. Replace whatever is contained in the 'Incoming Mail (POP3)' box with 'localhost'. Add an '@' symbol after the 'Account name' field followed by the text you removed. Click 'Apply'.



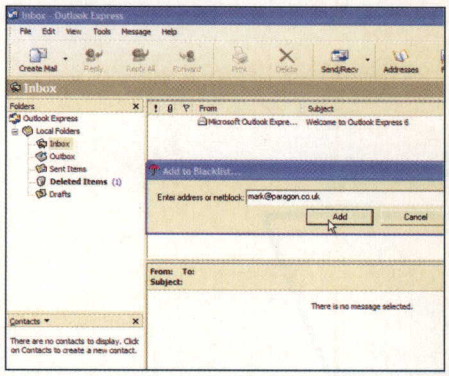
6 Remember your details

When you start Outlook after making the changes or when you check your inbox, you may need to enter your password. If so, remember to amend your username field if the prompt still carries the original one, otherwise SpamPal will error.



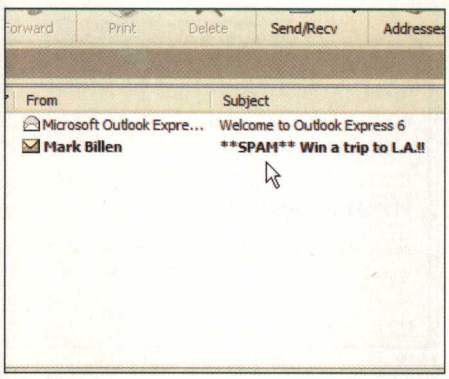
7 Connections

Having entered your details, you should see SpamPal's connection window. This can also be accessed through the System Tray menu under 'Status' and shows that everything is working. Details such as server and user should be listed.



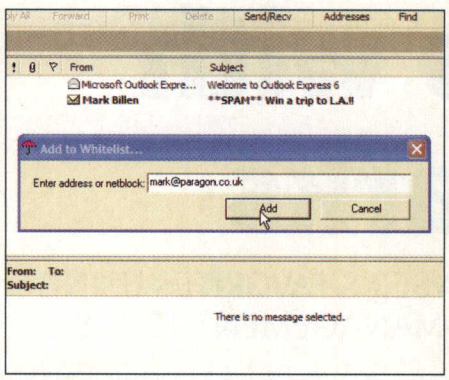
8 Blacklist

SpamPal allows you to add junk mails to a blacklist. This identifies the source's email address and will tag the message's subject text with a defined phrase. Select 'Add to Blacklist' from the Tray menu or access the list from the 'Options' dialog.



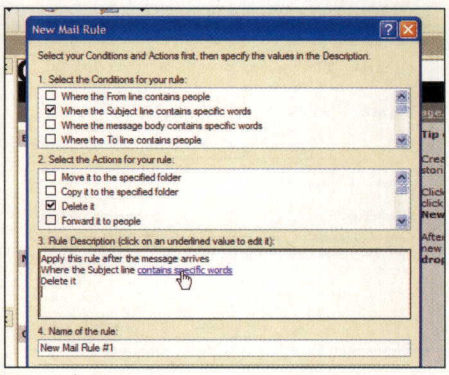
9 Blacked out

The above example shows a test message from a blacklisted email address. You'll notice that the phrase '**SPAM**' has been added. This lets you quickly identify messages to delete, and the chosen phrase can easily be configured.



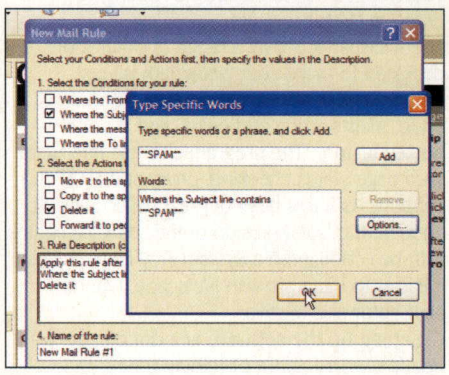
10 Create a whitelist

The complete reverse of blacklisting, here you can specify any addresses that might be confused for Spam to be left alone. Simply select 'Add To Whitelist' from the System Tray menu or select the 'Whitelist' tab within Options.


New Mail Rule
Select your Conditions and Actions first, then specify the values in the Description.
1. Select the Conditions for your rule:
Where the From line contains people
Where the Subject line contains specific words
Where the message body contains specific words
Where the To line contains people
2. Select the Actions for your rule:
Move it to the specified folder
Copy it to the specified folder
Delete it
Forward it to people
3. Rule Description (click on an underlined value to edit it):
Apply this rule after the message arrives
Where the Subject line contains specific words
Delete it
4. Name of the rule:
New Mail Rule #1

11 Catch them if you can

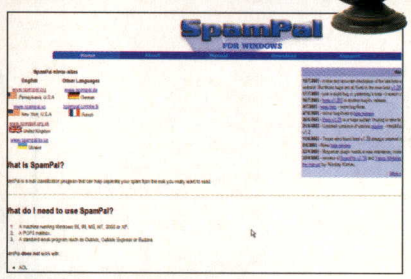
With your unwanted emails blacklisted, you can set your mail client to filter the spam. Click 'Tools' and 'Message Rules' and Select 'Mail'. In the dialog, select each step-by-step action you desire and click the blue links to add tag phrases, etc.



12 You rule

A prompt will appear asking you to provide the tags that SpamPal will insert into the subject headers. Type the phrase, the default being '**SPAM**', and click 'Add' to append it to the list below. Click 'OK' and give the mail rule a name.

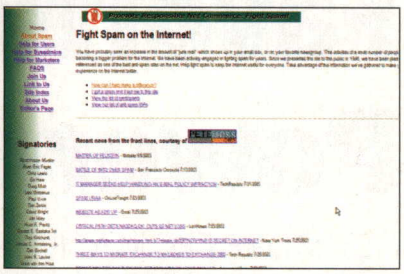
Web resources



SpamPal Home

www.spampal.org

The information and support provided by SpamPal's home page is incredibly valuable. It is here and only here that the instructions for setting the program up with your chosen client can be found. Just click the 'Manual' link to get all the most common gripes explained away.



Fight Spam

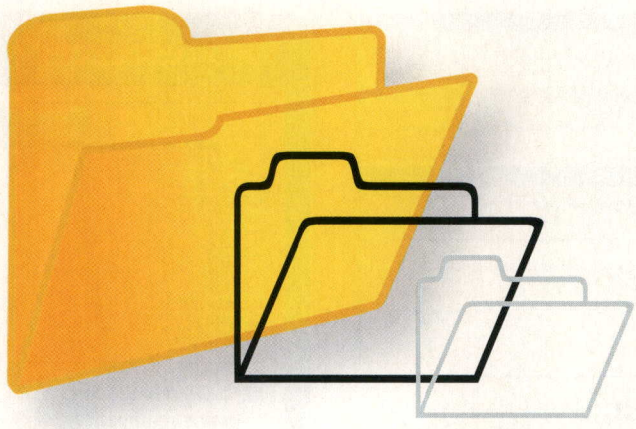
spam.abuse.net

This site seems to be an online lobby against all things spam. It serves as a good indicator of how cheesed off people are by the problem and has information about what you can do to combat it as well as extensive FAQs discussing the subject.

Power users' tip

ALL OF SPAMPAL'S options are quickly accessible from the Options item on the Tray menu and are certainly worth looking at. Apart from little things like the way the interface responds while you check mail, there are also tools for periodic updates. You can even edit the tabbed black and white lists from here and define the tag phrase to add to the subject. Perhaps the most powerful section is the tab for 'DNSBL Lists'. Basically these are dedicated servers that hold blacklists of known spam sources which SpamPal is geared to use. These are referenced by the program and then all email you receive from those listed addresses will be tagged.

In brief:
Task: Whip your bookmarks into shape
Software I need: Powermarks 3.5
Difficulty: Half an hour
Time I need: Pretty straightforward



Get more from Favorites with Powermarks

GET MORE FROM YOUR BROWSER'S FAVORITES USING THE ENHANCED BOOKMARK-MANAGEMENT TOOLS WITHIN POWERMARKS 3.5

IF YOU'RE A seasoned Net user you'll know all about the benefits of keeping an up-to-date collection of bookmarks within your browser. It means you don't have to waste time farting about with search engines or spend an entire afternoon entering an endless URL into the address bar.

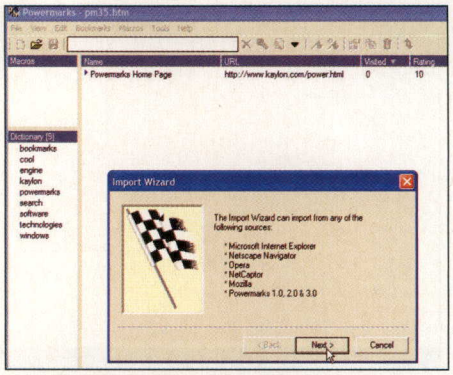
However, if you're not careful bookmarks can actually slow you down online if you don't keep them well organised. A cluttered set of Favorites that aren't grouped in any way will only lead to frustration when you have to trawl through the entire collection just to find the one you're looking for. As a result, you can end up spending longer accessing the site than you would have done if you'd typed in the address manually.

If organising your bookmarks sounds like too much hassle and you've got better things to do with your time than mess about with lots of files and folders, then fret ye not, as there's a program that'll be right up your street, getting the job done in a jiffy. Powermarks lets you cut out the whole folder and hierarchy system, allowing you to create, find and browse large collections of bookmarks.

The software is compatible with all the popular browsers, namely Netscape, IE, Mozilla, Opera and NetCaptor. You can keep tabs on your bookmarks by adding notes, descriptions and keyword fields to each of your Favorites. You also get a series of flexible import and export capabilities along with synchronisation with browser bookmarks, so you can use the same set with a range of different Web browsers.

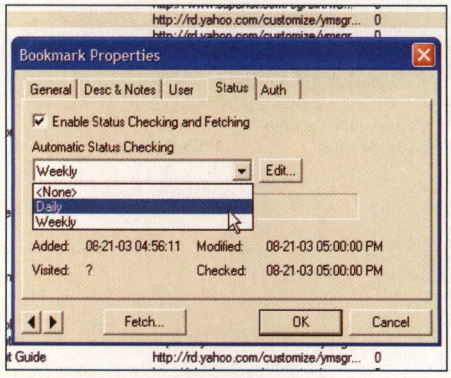
Powermarks boasts a range of other tools designed to make your bookmark issues evaporate without a trace, including autosave, undo, macro, copy and paste, and a global hotkey feature. The program also has intelligent Web page status checking, proxy and HTTP 1.1 support. As if this bevy of great utilities wasn't enough, the latest version of the software comes with two configurable System Tray icons, making it easier to integrate with Netscape, Opera, NetCaptor and Mozilla.

Setting up the software is a doddle, so you needn't worry about obtaining a degree in bookmarkology to get the thing working. You should find you're able to transform your collection of Favorites into a gleaming set of links that you can access at the drop of a hat – saving you lots of time when surfing. You can download the program from **www.kaylon.com**.



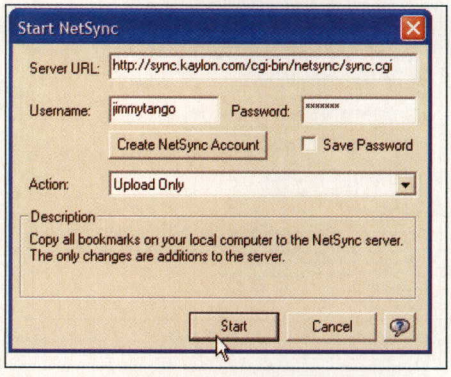
1 Importing bookmarks

After installing the Powermarks application the first thing you need to do is import your existing browser bookmarks. The Import wizard will guide you through the process, helping you call in your Favorites from IE, Netscape, Opera and Mozilla.



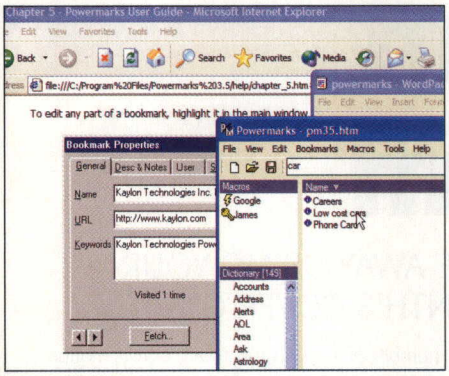
4 Status checking

Click on the 'Status' tab within the Properties menu. This handy feature lets you check the status of a bookmarked page to find out if the page has been changed since your last visit. You can even enable automatic checking using the drop-down menu.



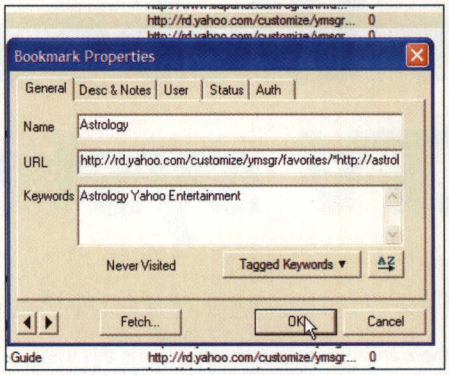
7 Upload your bookmarks

One of the best features is the 'NetSync' service which lets you synchronise your bookmarks and store a backup online. Click the 'Sync' icon in the toolbar and sign up for a free NetSync account. Enter your username and password, and hit 'Upload only'.



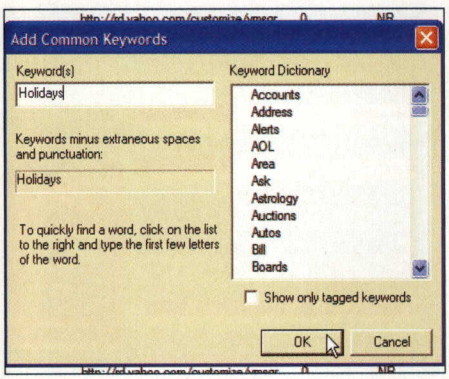
2 Search for a site

Searching is a key part of the Powermarks utility and is always active. Simply type a keyword into the 'Search' window and the program will update the search results incrementally as each character is typed, making searching much faster.



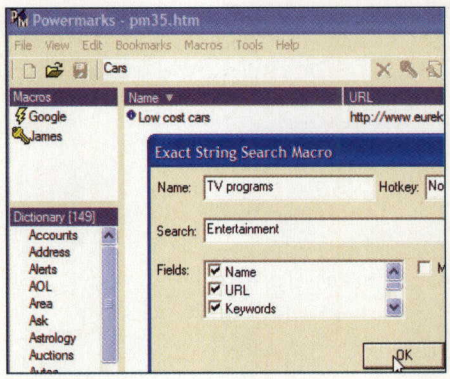
3 Edit the properties

If you wish to change the details relating to each bookmark you can do so using the Properties menu, available from the Edit menu. Here you can change the name, description and any keywords for bookmarks to make them easier to search for.



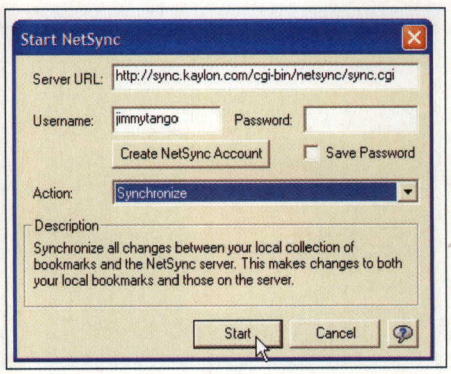
5 Add common keywords

Another way of speeding up the process of hunting for bookmarks is to add a keyword to multiple Favorites using the Add Common Keyword command. Highlight the bookmarks, right-click and choose 'Add Common Keyword'.



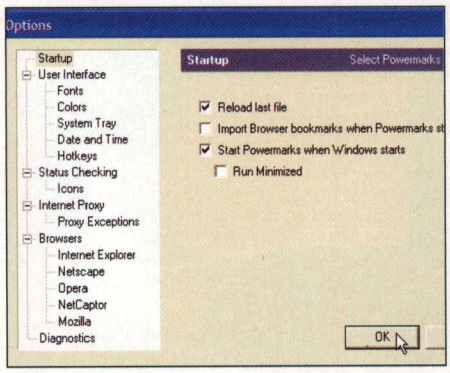
6 Setting up macros

Powermarks has a bevy of cool tools to save you time. The Macros menu allows you to set up a macro for either a URL, Keyword Search or Exact String Search. You can then select an action from the menu in the top left of the interface.


Start NetSync
Server URL: http://sync.kaylon.com/cgi-bin/netsync/sync.cgi
Username: jimmytango
Password:
Create NetSync Account
Save Password
Action: Synchronize
Description
Synchronize all changes between your local collection of bookmarks and the NetSync server. This makes changes to both your local bookmarks and those on the server.
Start
Cancel

8 Get in sync

You can use the Synchronize option within the NetSync menu to synchronise all the changes between the bookmarks on the machine you're working on and the NetSync server, allowing you to update your list of bookmarks from wherever you are.



9 Run from the System Tray

If you find Powermarks indispensable, why not start it automatically when Windows launches? Choose 'Options' from the View menu and check 'Start Powermarks when Windows starts'. To run it in a minimised state check 'Run Minimized'.

Jargon buster

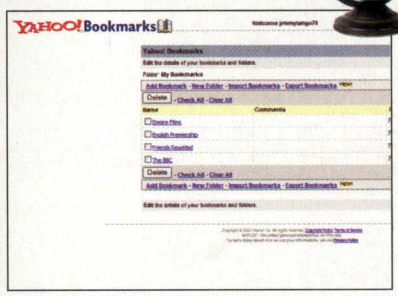
Synchronise

The process of updating the bookmarks that are stored on the server, so that you can add new Favorites or make changes to existing ones from any computer in the world.

System Tray

A small part of the Windows taskbar in the lower right-hand corner of the screen, which shows the time, along with a series of other icons. The program icons in the System Tray provide instant access to the features of particular applications that you use regularly.

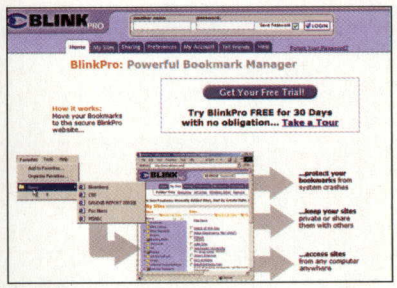
Web resources



Yahoo! Bookmarks

bookmarks.yahoo.com

Yahoo! is usually great for helping store stuff online, and its free Bookmarks service lets you import your IE or Netscape Favorites to the site so you can get hold of them from anywhere. You'll need a Yahoo! account to use this, but it doesn't take long to set up.


BLINK PRO
BlinkPro: Powerful Bookmark Manager
Get Your Free Trial!
Try BlinkPro FREE for 30 Days with no obligation... Take a Tour

BlinkPro

www.bookmarksplus.com

Allowing you to manage and store your top sites online, BlinkPro is a powerful bookmark manager that lets you keep them safe. You can keep your sites private or share them with the world. As you can access them from any machine, you never have to dig for your regular haunts when away from home.

In brief:
Task: Monitor your home using a Webcam
Software I need: Active WebCam 3.7 plus hardware drivers
Difficulty: 20 minutes
Time I need: Easier than catching a cold

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

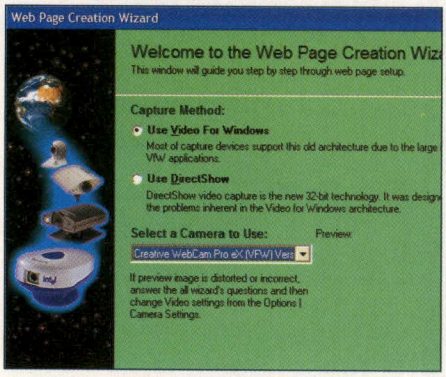
Turn your Webcam into a CCTV system

MONITOR WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR HOME WHILE YOU'RE AWAY USING YOUR WEBCAM AND A COPY OF ACTIVE WEBCAM FROM THIS MONTH'S COVER CD

IF YOU SPEND your days at work wondering if burglars are helping themselves to the macaroni cheese at home, you really need to step up your security measures so you can relax.

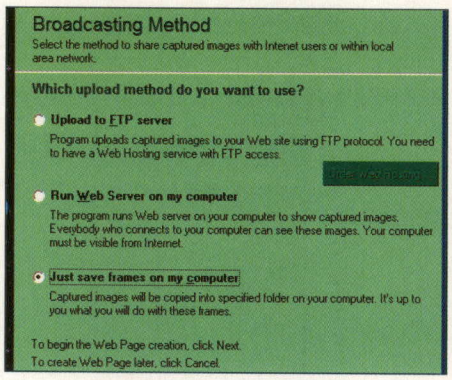
Apart from buying a couple of Rottweilers and wrapping your house in barbed wire, your best bet is to set your Webcam up as a home surveillance system. This isn't as tricky as it may sound, as there are several programs to help do this without requiring a degree in electronic engineering.

One of the most effective tools is Active WebCam, which we've included on this month's cover CD to help shore up your home and guard against intrusion. The easy-to-use program links up with your Webcam to keep real-time tabs on your valuables, and can deal with threats in a number of ways. The software boasts motion detection capabilities which trigger alerts via a series of different channels, most notably via a Web broadcast, where you can see exactly what's going on at home from anywhere in the world through a browser. The program can also be set up to send an email to yourself, friends or even law enforcement officials, with attached pictures.


Web Page Creation Wizard
Welcome to the Web Page Creation Wiz
This window will guide you step by step through web page setup.
Capture Method:
Use Video For Windows
Use DirectShow
Select a Camera to Use:
Preview

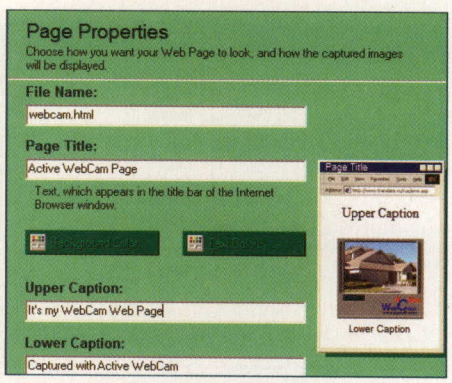
1 Creating a Web page

Hook up your Webcam and install Active WebCam. Now configure the Web page onto which your surveillance camera will be beamed. At the start of the Web Page Creation wizard select 'Use Video for Windows' and choose your camera from the list.


Broadcasting Method
Select the method to share captured images with Internet users or within local area network.
Which upload method do you want to use?
Upload to FTP server
Run Web Server on my computer
Just save frames on my computer
To begin the Web Page creation, click Next.
To create Web Page later, click Cancel.

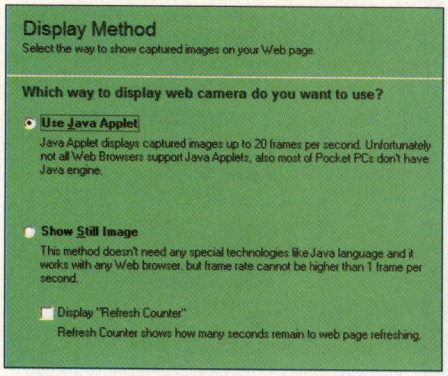
2 Choose a broadcast mode

Now you need to select the method by which you want to broadcast your footage over the Web. You can upload to an FTP server, run a Web server on your own computer or simply save the frames to your hard drive for later viewing or uploading.



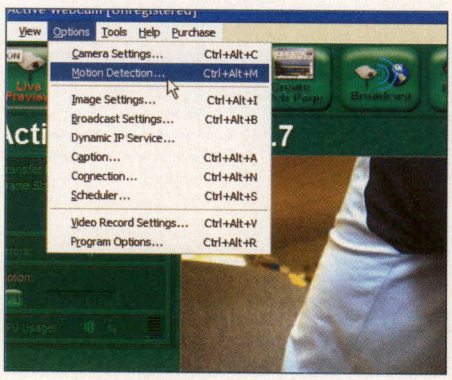
3 Setting up the page

The next menu screen allows you to change the appearance of the Web page. Here you can enter a title for the page plus captions to appear above and below the Webcam image. If you wish, you can also tinker about with the background and text colours.


Display Method
Select the way to show captured images on your Web page.
Which way to display web camera do you want to use?
Use Java Applet
Java Applet displays captured images up to 20 frames per second. Unfortunately not all Web Browsers support Java Applets, also most of Pocket PCs don't have Java engine.
Show Still Image
This method doesn't need any special technologies like Java language and it works with any Web browser, but frame rate cannot be higher than 1 frame per second.
Display "Refresh Counter"
Refresh Counter shows how many seconds remain to web page refreshing.

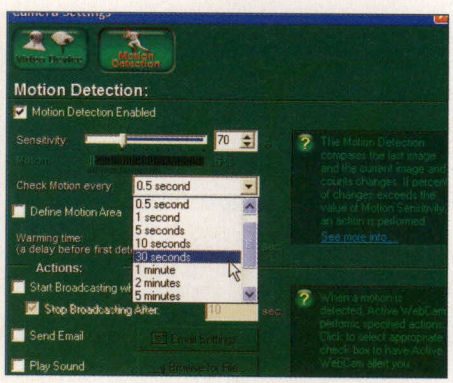
4 Pick a display method

You can either display your Webcam images online using a Java applet or by showing a still image onscreen. Not all browsers support Java applets, so you may be better off opting for the latter, but this won't display images faster than one frame a second.



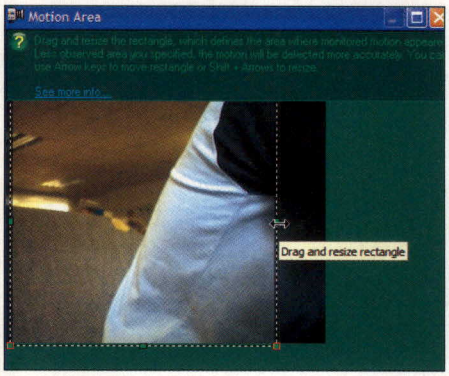
5 Poetry in motion

After configuring the Web page settings, you're ready to set up the motion detection so you can spot any suspicious movement on your PC when you're not there. Choose 'Motion Detection' from the Options menu to start setting this up.



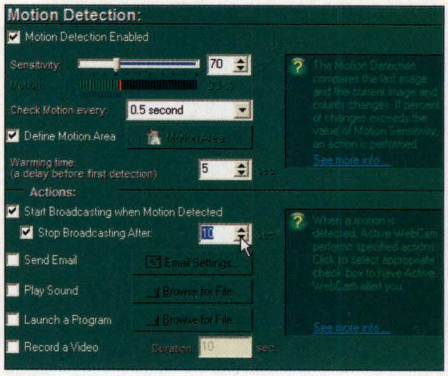
6 Show your sensitive side

The first thing to configure is the Motion Sensitivity, which defines a value in percent of the changes onscreen. By moving the slider you can make the detection more or less sensitive. Now select the frequency of motion detection from the drop menu.



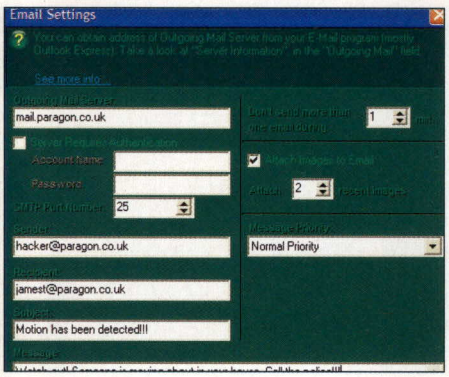
7 Define the motion area

Active WebCam allows you to specify an area of motion detection, which is useful if you have any constantly moving objects in your room. To select the area click 'Motion Area' and drag the frame around the area you want.



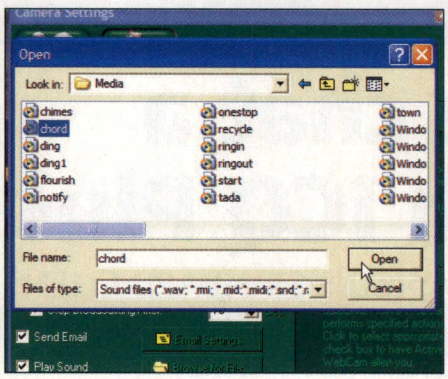
8 Going live

The Actions section is where you can tell Active WebCam what to do if it detects motion. The first option is to start broadcasting via the Web, which can be done by ticking the checkbox and telling the program how long to broadcast the footage for.



9 You've got mail

You can also get the program to send you an email alerting you to the motion detection, along with attached pics of the offence. Click 'Email Settings' and enter the outgoing mail server details, plus the address you want the mail sent to and any messages.

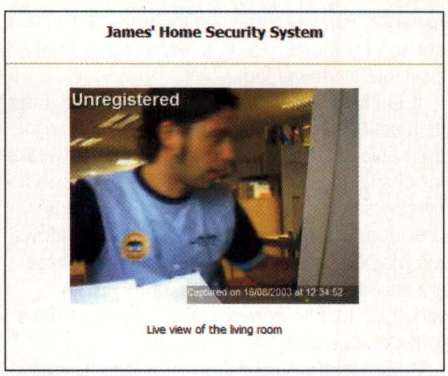


10 Warning sign

If you really want to put the wind up the burglars, why not set the program up to play a sound when motion detection is triggered? Click the 'Browse for File' button then select your scariest beep or bloop from the Wav files on your computer.

11 Testing motion detection

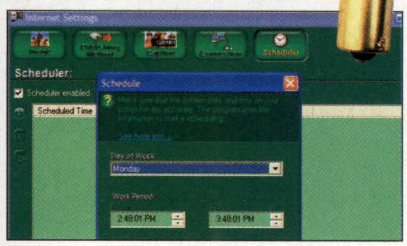
Click 'OK' to save the motion detection settings. You are now ready to test it, so create some movement in front of the camera. The motion sensitivity bar should fluctuate and the Motion sign will flash up.



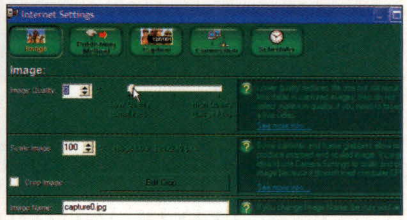
12 You've been framed

Whenever motion is detected your Web page should start broadcasting the action so you can catch the crooks red-handed. To view your page simply visit the address you used to upload it, or browse to the file on your hard drive that you specified.

Power users' tips



ONE OF THE OTHER great features of Active WebCam is its scheduler, which allows you to perform tasks on a specified day and time. For instance, you may wish to start broadcasting during the morning then stop it in the evening. You can schedule a task simply by choosing 'Scheduler' from the Options menu. Select the 'Scheduler Enabled' box to turn it on, then use the 'Add', 'Edit' and 'Delete' buttons to insert and modify schedule lines.



BY CLICKING ON the Internet Settings button in the main toolbar you can fiddle around with the way the image is presented online. The Image menu allows you to alter the JPEG quality, giving you the ability to choose between a picture which loads quickly and one which is of very high quality but takes longer to display due to its file size. The Caption menu within the Internet Settings menu is also useful, as it lets you insert a tag directly onto the picture so your visitors know exactly what they're looking at.

Jargon buster

Java applet
A small program which allows Web pages to perform functions such as animations, calculators and streaming video. While this can be useful, not all browsers are able to display Java applets.

FTP server
A machine which enables the transfer of files over the Internet. By uploading your Webcam images to an FTP server you can view the captured images by pointing your Web browser to your site.

In brief:
Task: Take control of your online chatting with ICQ Plus
Software I need: ICQ Pro 2003a and ICQ Plus
Difficulty: Dead simple
Time I need: Around five minutes

Give online chat a facelift with ICQ Plus

IF YOU'RE FED UP WITH THE WAY ICQ'S STANDARD CLIENT LOOKS, GIVE IT A TIMELY NEW LOOK WITH THIS EXCELLENT AND EASY-TO-USE CUSTOMISATION SOFTWARE

MOST INTERNET USERS will have heard of ICQ, even if they haven't tried it. Pronounced as 'I-seek-you', this popular system for socialising on the Web has been around for an absolute age.

Basically it's a popular method for socialising online, with users able to communicate in real time. 'Buddies' or contacts can be searched for and added, with the program cleverly informing you of when your friends are available. You can then quickly exchange messages, engage in chat or even play multiplayer games in exactly the same way as you would with something like MSN Messenger.

The latest versions will even enable you to send emails, transfer files and send SMS text messages to mobile phones. This seems quite appropriate, considering the program we cover in this tutorial will personalise your ICQ client just like those funky phone covers they flog down the market.

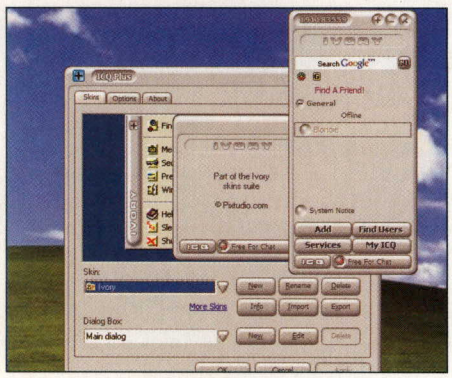
Application 'skinning', or the redesigning of a program's interface has been around for some time and is becoming increasingly popular. Some of the most obvious examples are applications such as WinAmp or Media Player that can now be transformed into all sorts of wacky creations in the space of seconds by downloading one of many thousands of add-ons. ICQ Plus is specifically designed for customising ICQ Pro 2003a, although generally users can use any number of ICQ-compliant programs to access the network. However, this seems to be the one chosen by those getting started and is freely available to download.

ICQ Plus is a separate program that integrates its functionality into the main client. You can then quickly gain access to all manner of tweaks for changing your chat surroundings. There's a healthy selection of factory themes or 'skins' provided, featuring examples that ape Windows XP, Mac OS and even MSN Messenger. These are accompanied by some striking custom variations that be conveniently added to from a further range available on the site.

What's more, you can even generate your own perfect environment in Paint Shop Pro or Photoshop and export the skins yourself. You'll also find plenty of links to step-by-step walkthroughs that explain how it's done, making sure your Net-togethers look as stylish as possible in no time.

1 Launch

Once ICQ Plus has been installed it should automatically be added to the menus of the ICQ Pro client. Click 'Main' at the bottom of the main window and a pop-up list of options should include an item labelled 'Plus'. Select this to open the main dialog.

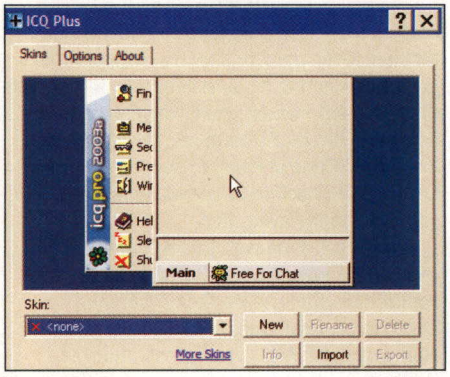


4 Lunar stylee

Each skin will be applied to all the various dialogs within ICQ Pro, and here's an example of the 'Lunar' fascia. You will see that all the buttons, windows and most of the icons have been rendered in the new, smooth 3D style.

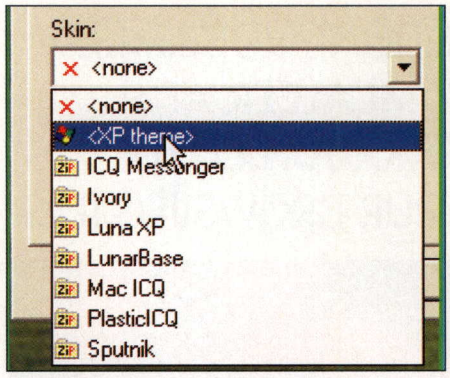
7 I want more

Under the drop-down skin selection menu is a link labelled 'More Skins'. Click on this to view a Web page listing sites where new styles can be downloaded. For the most part all skins are free, and you can even gain tips from the authors themselves.



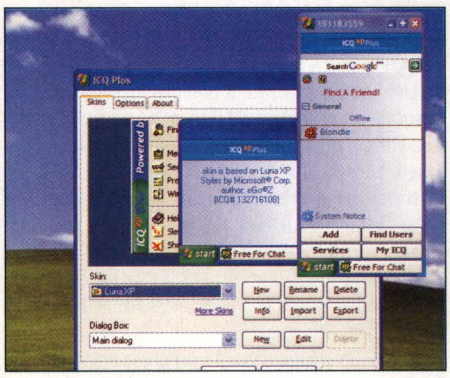
2 Tabbed up

The main interface for ICQ Plus features several tabbed sections for selecting or defining skins, setting file options and learning about the developers. A previewing window is provided so you can take a look at each available skin before selecting it.



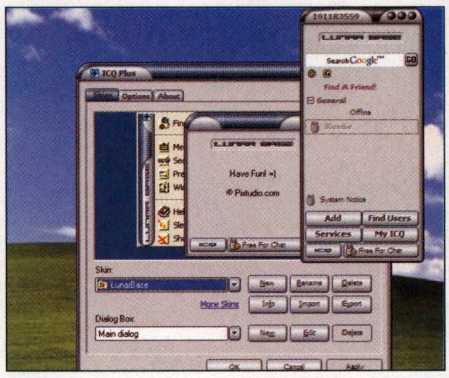
3 Gimme skin

Drop down the menu labelled 'Skin' on the initial Skins tab. You'll see a list of all those currently installed, and it's simply a case of clicking one of the items and previewing. When you are happy with the skin you've selected click 'Apply' to accept.



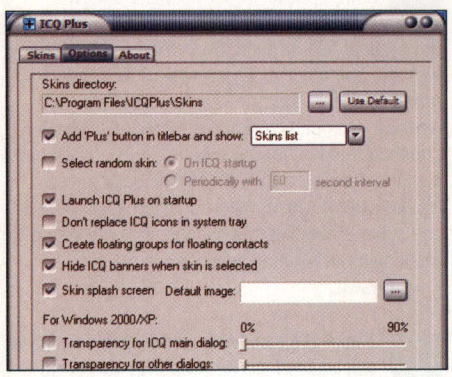
5 XP style

Some of the most impressive skins are those that are styled in a well-known design. The 'Luna XP' example is a subtle scheme that fits seamlessly with the default desktop colours of Windows. Start buttons are added and fonts changed to complete the look.



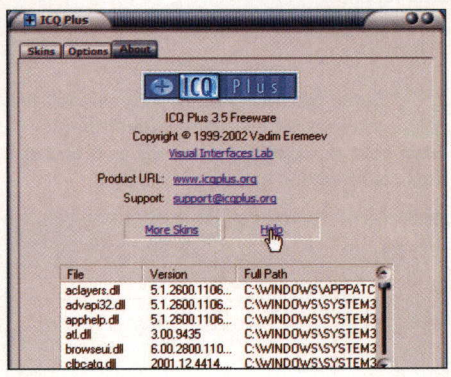
6 A glimpse into the future

There does seem to be a distinct moon theme running through the set of skins and 'LunarBase' is no exception. This cool metallic style features brushed steel-effect buttons and contrasting 3D borders. Flick through the range and pick one that suits you.



8 Have it your way

The Options tab lets you define where skins should be kept and how the ICQ client uses Plus. You can toggle the Launch button and have a random skin selected at various times. Transparency levels can also be set for various dialogs when used in XP.



9 About

Clicking on the About tab not only gets information about the version number, but also finds links to the ICQ Plus Web site. The Help link is useful in directing you to a tips page with links to tutorials for successfully creating your own custom skins.

Power users' tip

CREATING YOUR OWN skins isn't difficult. All it takes is logical thinking and knowledge of how the interface you're skinning behaves. Any scheme or style must consider the characteristics of the original elements. Make a diagram of where buttons, and windows are situated in relation to each other (giving clearance to bevelled edges). Draw or paint each dialog's skin in your graphics package before slicing it. To make the skin scaleable and fit the dialog, isolate elements that will tile. Chopping each screen into corner sections, parts that cannot scale and those that can be tiled takes skill, but the ICQ Plus site tutorials explain the process.

Web resources

ICQ

web.icq.com

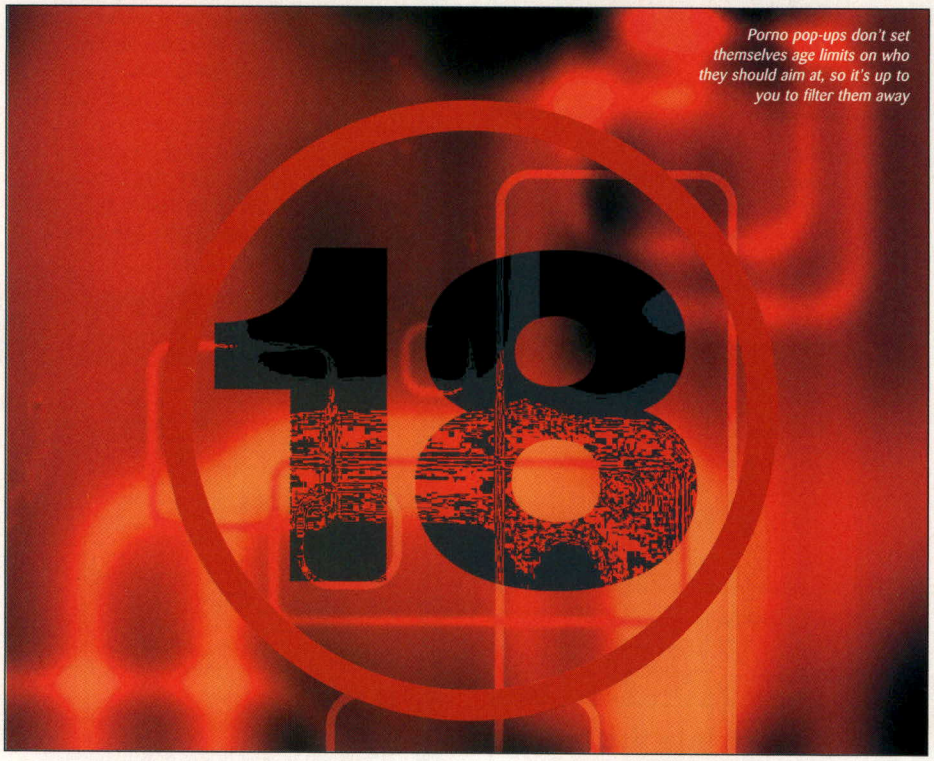
This is the official home of ICQ and it's here that you can register onto the network and receive your identification number. Clients are also available, along with links to friendship groups and message boards on movies, music, hobbies and more.

ICQ Plus

www.icqplus.org

Here you'll find all the available product information for the Plus program, including revision history and readme text. Most importantly, you'll gain access to extra skins and a number of FAQs and tutorials that reveal all the trade secrets in detail.

GOT CONNECTION PROBLEMS? EMAIL **DANNY MCALEER** AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK**. HE'LL CURE YOUR BROWSING ILLS



Porno pop-ups don't set themselves age limits on who they should aim at, so it's up to you to filter them away

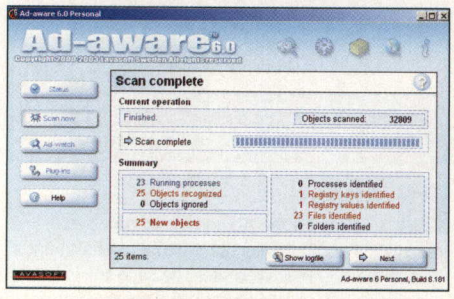
Pornographic pop-ups

Q Some time ago I constructed a Web site for our Residents' Association. As part of a wish to hike up its ranking on search engines I foolishly registered with some sites that stated they could advance my site on various engines. As part of the process I had to give my email address. Since then I have been receiving huge amounts of spam (up to 70 per day) offering me various pills, creams, potions and gold club wedges. I have purchased a spam cleaner, Mailwasher, which assists in bouncing unwanted mail, but have accidentally opened some in error, and one must have downloaded something to IE. Now when I open IE6, while my home page opens correctly, a few seconds later I get additional pages opening up for porn sites. I have tried to eliminate these, but without success. The commands must be concealed somewhere either in IE or my Registry. The latter I do not like to touch for fear of doing something calamitous.

Would uninstalling IE and reinstalling it delete these unwanted commands, or is the solution more fundamental and likely to involve interrogating the Registry? Your help would be appreciated, because not only do I often feel inadequate when these sites pop up (ahem), but also my wife and daughter use my PC and the Internet and it is embarrassing for them – and me. I am running Windows 98.

David Baker

A **Some folk really know how to spoil the Internet for everybody, don't they? From your description, it sounds as if one of those confounded emails contained a pernicious ActiveX script or something similar that installed spyware on your computer. The good news is that it's possible to fix this sort of thing without hacking your way through the Registry. First of all, open the 'Add/Remove Programs' Control Panel to see if a program has installed itself in Windows. If so, remove it and live happily ever after.**



Programs like Ad-aware let you rid your machine of spyware without attacking the inner sanctum of the Registry

However, if it doesn't go away this easily, you can try one of a number of great applications that can do the job for you. Spyware removal tools are fortunately in abundance. Ad-Aware is a great, and free, application (download it from www.lavasoftusa.com) that will scan your computer's memory, Registry settings and applications on your hard drive for known spyware, and safely remove them. It's also frequently updated, so chances are excellent it will fix the problem for you.

Another possible solution may manifest itself in the form of SpyBot Search and Destroy (www.safer-networking.org). This too searches for known spyware and adware and removes it. Usefully, it'll create a backup just in case you remove something you later discover was not the cause, and something in fact, that you need. Like Ad-Aware, this is also free.

If neither of these programs can alleviate your 'adult' intrusions, there are many support groups on the Net who are only too happy to oblige, such as that on the SpywareInfo site: www.spywareinfo.com/forums. First though, try visiting this cool site: doxdesk.com/parasite. It runs a script that looks for common browser parasites (and may be able to tell you what's installed). Alongside this is a long list of solutions to ridding yourself of spyware.

Can't link, won't link

Q When I'm looking around on the Web for stuff, I prefer to open links in a new window, just in case I want to quickly get back to the original site or page. Everything was fine until, weirdly, one day the 'Open Link in New Window' menu option in the pop-up menu just stopped working. Sometimes nothing happens at all (I've checked that it's not my mouse), and occasionally a window does open but nothing loads inside it. It's not one of those critical problems, because I can still use the Net, but it does spoil my way of working a bit. Any suggestions?

Mark Barrow

A **There are sundry possible problems that can cause Internet Explorer to act up in this manner. It may be that an important DLL file is either missing, corrupted or improperly registered in the Registry, or a Registry key is missing, wrong or just damaged.**

Quit all your open applications and click on the 'Start' button. Choose 'Run…' and in the

command prompt type: 'regsvr32 urlmon.dll' (minus the quotes). Press 'OK'. A message should appear saying 'DllRegisterServer in urlmon.dll succeeded'. Click on 'OK' and then retry, opening a link in a new window in Internet Explorer. If this fails to remedy the problem, repeat this action replacing the 'urlmon.dll' with each of the following files: 'shdocvw.dll', 'msjava.dll', 'actxprxy.dll', 'oleaut32.dll', 'mshtml.dll' and 'browseui.dll'. Also, if you're running Windows 2000 or XP, include 'shell32.dll'.

After this, try again to see if you can open a link in a new window. If Internet Explorer still doesn't behave itself, you will need to check that a handful of Registry keys are included in your Registry settings, and that they have the right values. To do this, click on 'Start', followed by 'Run...' again, and this time, enter 'regedit' into the command prompt. Open the following key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\CLASSES\Interface\{00020400-0000-0000-C000-000000000046}

In here should be a single string value called (Default) with the value IDispatch. Open this folder in the left-hand list to find the three subsequent keys and values. Check that these are shipshape: ProxyStubClsid and ProxyStubClsid32 – both should have a string value, each set to (Default) with a value of {00020420-0000-0000-C000-000000000046}.

Hopefully this should fix the problem, otherwise your only other course of action is to uninstall and then reinstall Internet Explorer. If the version of IE you're using is the one that's built into the Operating System, your only course is to reinstall or repair Windows (you can thank Microsoft for that really smart idea).

Finally, given that this just happened without any obvious causes, it might be worth checking your hard drive for errors. Run a system check and defragment the hard drive to minimise the potential for errors with IE in the future.

Where have all my pictures gone?

Q I despair. I've tried everything I can think of, and even heeded the advice of a previous Web Browsing Q&A, but IE6 still continues to load Web pages with the images disabled. I have emptied the cache, uninstalled and reinstalled IE (I think), fiddled with all the settings I could find and banged my head against the monitor until it was sore, but to no avail. Have you got any other ideas?

Lauren Carlton

A Blimey. As a matter of fact, since this problem was addressed in issue 83, some other possible solutions have indeed surfaced, so you might like to give these a go before you give yourself a terrible headache. First of all, let's check that it's not IE that's gone berserk. Click on the 'Start' button and choose 'Run'. In the command prompt dialog box type the following: 'regsvr32.exe / i shdocvw.dll' – minus the quotes. (If you're using Internet Explorer version 5.0, enter the line as 'regsvr32 /i shdoc401.dll'.) A further dialog should pop up to let you know that this action was successful. See if that doesn't help.

If not, it's conceivable that another application is somehow interfering with Internet Explorer, such as your firewall or anti-virus software. Try temporarily disabling these programs and reconnecting to the Web with Internet Explorer. If pictures now appear in the Web pages, you'll need to adjust your security settings or check that there are no installation errors in these applications.

I want flashing icons

Q Although I have broadband, I don't always want to be connected to the Net. Whereas before when I had the dial-up account, I could disconnect by double-clicking on the icon in the System Tray, it's not there any more. Is it possible to get it back?

Sean Nicholls

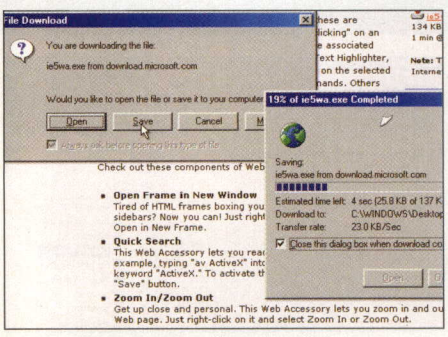
A The modem icon in the System Tray is great, and no-one should be without it. It's easy enough to restore it to the System →

You've been framed

Q Maybe I was just dreaming or something, but I'm sure Internet Explorer once had an option to break a page out of a frameset so it could be viewed on its own. Without this feature it's almost impossible to store a page in your favourites when the site uses frames. Anyway, I've just recently upgraded to version 6, and it's not in there either, so it wasn't a premonition. Perhaps it was just wishful thinking?

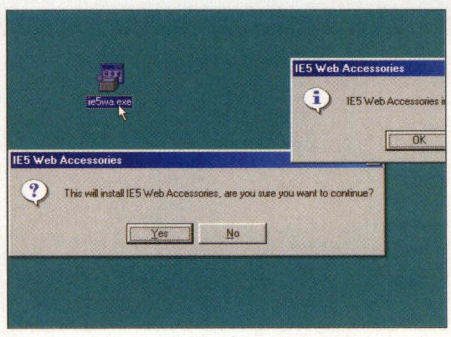
Claire Timms

A Obviously, you are no soothsayer, but you do have a good memory for features. When Microsoft released IE5, it came with some rather cool add-on packs, one of which contained a small but perfectly formed pile of useful tools. Within these tools is the option you require. Although this add-on is really meant only for the various version 5 incarnations of Internet Explorer, it will also happily work in later versions of the browser.


File Download
You are downloading the file:
ie5wa.exe from download.microsoft.com
Would you like to open the file or save it to your computer?
Open
Save
Cancel
19% of ie5wa.exe Completed
Saving:
ie5wa.exe from download.microsoft.com
Estimated time left: 4 sec (25.8 KB of 137 K
Download to: C:\WINDOWS\Desktop
Transfer rate: 23.0 KB/Sec
Close this dialog box when download co
Check out these components of Web
Open Frame in New Window
Tired of HTML frames boxing you
sidebars? Now you can! Just right
Open in New Frame.
Quick Search
This Web Accessory lets you rea
example, typing "av ActiveX" int
keyword "ActiveX." To activate t
"Save" button.
Zoom In/Zoom Out
Get up close and personal. This Web Accessory lets you zoom in and ou
Web page. Just right-click on it and select Zoom In or Zoom Out.

1 Download the file

Point your browser in the direction of **www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/previous/webaccess/ie5wa.asp**. Click the 'ie5wa.exe' link on the page and choose 'Save' in the dialog. Save it to your desktop (it's only 137Kb).



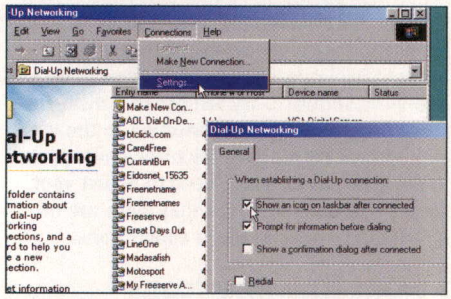
2 Install the accessories

Close your browser and double-click the ie5wa.exe icon on your desktop. Press 'Yes' when prompted to install the IE5 Web Accessories. The installation is completely automatic. Just click on 'OK' when it says it's finished.

3 Pop it out

Restart your browser. Now when you are viewing Web sites that contain frames, you can simply right-click on the page you want to view separately and choose 'Open Frame in New Window'. Easy!

Tray, but only if you know where to look. Double-click on 'My Computer' and then again on the Dial-up Networking connections icon. In the subsequent window, find the 'Connections' menu and choose 'Settings...'. In the subsequent dialog box, tick the box labelled 'Show an icon on taskbar after connected' and press 'OK'. Now when you're online, you should get your modem icons in the System Tray.



The System Tray's modem icon not only gives you a visual indication of your online status, but can also be used to terminate your connection

The weakest link

Q I have Outlook Express 6 and Internet Explorer 6 Service Pack 1 installed. In Outlook Express, I can't follow links that are embedded into emails that people send me. It even happens when I use Outlook 2000. I thought it might be a security setting in IE, but they have always been the same. Any ideas as to what the cause may be?

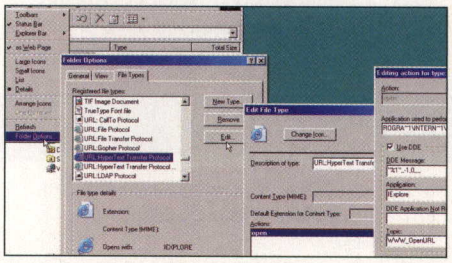
Stephen Harper

A **It may be stating the irrefutably obvious, but it's always best to check that Internet Explorer is set as the default browser before you start poking around in obscure settings. You may have set this to another browser in the past which has since been removed from your computer. To check this, open the Control Panel and double-click on the 'Internet Options' icon. Select the 'Programs' tab and tick the box labelled 'Internet Explorer should check to see whether it is the default browser'. Press 'OK' to close the Properties dialog box, restart IE and, when you are prompted, click on 'Yes' to make IE the default browser.**

Now that we've eliminated the blindingly obvious, let's have a look as some other more obscure reasons as to why links from your mail window won't open in IE. These include properly setting the file association with URLs (which may also have been affected by programs coming and going on your PC).

Open an Explorer window, and from the View menu choose 'Folder Options...'. In the Folder Options dialog box, select the 'File Types' tab and scroll down the list of registered file types until you get to 'URL:HyperText Transfer Protocol'. Highlight this entry and press either the 'Edit' or 'Advanced' button (which label you have depends on your version of Windows).

Highlight the 'Open' action in the next window and press the button marked 'Edit...'. Another dialog will open. In the first text box you should make sure the entry reads:



If your file associations are set incorrectly, you may not be able to click on a link in an email to open it in your browser

"C:\Program Files\Internet Explorer\iexplore.exe" –nohome.

Make sure that this file path does indeed point to the 'iexplore.exe' application. You might find that you have truncated 8+3 filenames in the path: "C:\PROGRA~1\INTERN~1\iexplore.exe". In most cases, this should work fine, but if you are having difficulties, it's worth writing it out in longhand.

Tick the 'Use DDE' box and make sure that the first, second and fourth text fields underneath read as follows:

"%1",,-1,0,,,,
IExplore
WWW_OpenURL

Leave the 'DDE Application Not Running' field empty. Repeat this with the URL:Gopher Protocol, URL:Hypertext Transfer protocol with Privacy, and the URL:File Transfer Protocol file types, setting all the parameters as above.

Now, the next time you start Internet Explorer you may be told that IE is no longer your default browser, and asked whether or not you'd like it to be so. Make sure the box labelled 'Internet Explorer should check to see if it is the default browser' is not ticked and press 'No'. If you click on 'Yes' IE might undo all the good work you've just done.

Flaky system file

Q I often get some strange error messages, but only when I am online. For example, it suggested that user.exe, in the C:\windows\system folder, may be corrupted and that I should reinstall it. Can you reinstall one file, or do you have to completely reinstall Windows? If so, where, and could this be the root cause of my error messages? I'm using Windows 98.

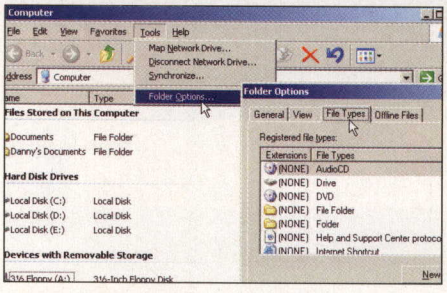
Liz Payne

Associate HTML with IE

Q I tried Netscape 7 in an effort to move away from using Microsoft's ubiquitous browser, but it doesn't have some of the features I like about IE, eg the AutoComplete for forms. So I decided to go back to IE, but now all the HTML pages on my PC are associated with Netscape, and clicking on them and other links opens them in Netscape. How can I change this? I use WinXP.

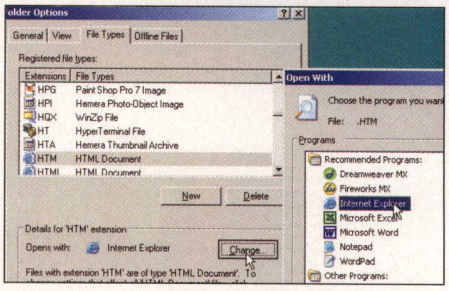
Paul Denon

A **The simplest way is to make Internet Explorer the default browser for your computer. This should automatically associate HTML files with IE. However, if this doesn't work, or IE is already set as the default browser (and it still doesn't open HTML pages), you'll need to edit Windows' file associations:**



1 Open Folder Options

First of all, open any Explorer window, and select the 'Tools' menu at the top. Choose 'Folder Options...' and, in the dialog box that opens, select the 'File Types' tab.



2 Choose Internet Explorer

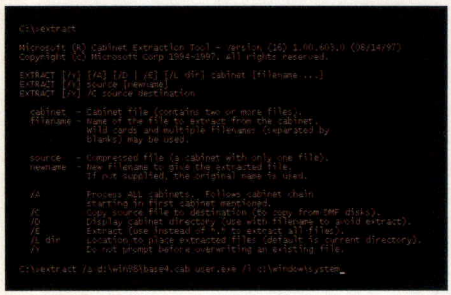
Scroll down the list of registered file types until you get to 'HTM – HTML Document'. Select it, and check if the panel below says 'Opens with Internet Explorer' and displays the IE icon. If not, hit 'Change...' and pick IE from the Open With dialog.

A **That certainly doesn't sound very healthy, and may well be contributing to your computer being a little sickly while you're on the Net. Fortunately, it's possible to repair individual Window files, negating any huge and disruptive Operating System reinstall. There's a program called 'extract.exe' on your Windows 98 CD, which you'll find in the Win98 folder. However, because you're twiddling with the Operating System, you need to be in MS-DOS.**

First, pop your Windows 98 CD in your drive and copy 'extract.exe' from the Win98 folder onto the root of your C:\ drive (this makes the next few steps easier). Eject the CD, click on 'Start', 'Shut Down' and select 'Restart in MS-DOS Mode' from the Shut Down dialog. After your PC has finished restarting it'll be time for some retro computing.

Make sure the Windows 98 CD-ROM is still in the drive. At the C:\> prompt type 'extract /a d:\win98\base4.cab user.exe /l c:\windows\system' (replace d with the letter of your CD-ROM drive if you have lots of hard disk partitions). This will scan through one of the cabinet files in the Windows 98 installation, extract 'user.exe' and copy it into your system folder. You'll probably get asked if you'd like to replace the existing file. Press 'Y' for yes, then press 'CTRL'+ 'ALT' + 'DEL' to restart (you can do that in DOS without upsetting matters).

Hopefully this should stop all those error messages appearing when you're online. There is an outside chance it might highlight some other underlying problems which may require you to reinstall Windows 98 after all. But it's definitely worth trying this first.



Ah, nostalgia. When Operating Systems loaded in seconds, command line prompts were all the rage and Thatcher ruled the country. Halcyon days, indeed...

It's no PDF, stupid...

Q When I try to view plain text files with Internet Explorer 5.5, my computer launches into Adobe Acrobat Reader instead of just displaying it in the browser window. Of course, Acrobat complains that this isn't a PDF file, which is a no-brainer. As if I didn't know. What's annoying is that this only happens in IE. Opening a text file offline starts Notepad. I don't think it's to do with the fact that I recently updated to Acrobat Reader 6, but maybe you know better?

Jon Allen

A **This is completely nuts. Given that text files open properly when you're using Windows Explorer, it's unlikely to be fixed by fiddling with the File Associations settings in the Folder Options dialog (explained above).**

However, it has been known for various browser enhancements to cause a few hiccups with IE file associations. There are a couple of settings in the Registry you might like to check. First, make sure the HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\.txt key has a string value inside called 'Content Type' which is set to 'Text/plain'. Secondly, have a look inside the HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Plug-ins key. If there are any sub keys or values with .txt in them, try removing them (make a written note of them first in case you need to restore the key if the edit doesn't help).

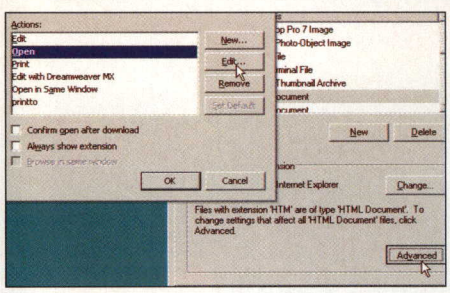
IE full installer

Q I only have a 56Kb modem at home, so I'm loathe to run some automatic update application and then wait for six days to download the most up-to-date version of IE. What I want to do is download the full installer with all the widgets and everything, in its entirety, with no other connections or post-downloads, at work where we have ADSL, and copy it to CD. Can you point me in the right direction for a full installer?

Mark Edwards

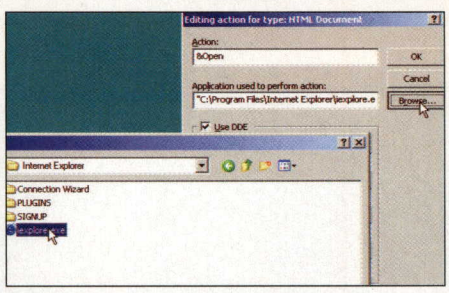
A **There is a workaround, but you do have to download the installer initially. Create a new folder on the root of your hard drive – or somewhere else equally convenient where the file path will be short, eg C:\downloads. Go to www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/downloads/critical/ie6sp1/default.asp and download the installer file to this folder on your hard drive. When it's finished, click on 'Start' and choose 'Run...'. In the command prompt, enter "C:\downloads\ie6setup.exe" /c:"ie6wzd.exe /d /s:""#E" making sure all the quotes and everything are in place.**

Accept the licence agreement and hit 'Next'. You'll be presented with a dialog asking for the location you'd like to download the files to, and which Operating Systems you'd like the files for. Tick the appropriate OS box for your computer at home and press 'Next'. If you lose your connection half way through, you can resume the download by repeating the command prompt. Click 'Yes' each time you're prompted to install a component (it won't actually install, but will download the appropriate CAB file). Once finished, copy the folder to a CD and run off home (well, best to wait until you're allowed to go home), and pop it into your PC. Double-click the 'ie6setup.exe' file to install IE6, without any need to connect to the Net.



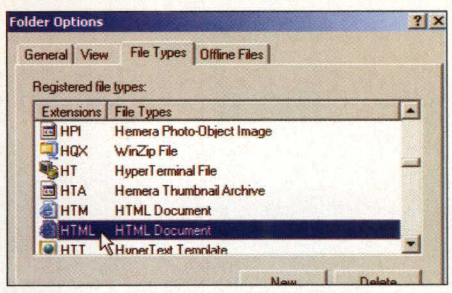
3 Check the association

If it already says 'Opens with Internet Explorer', you need to check the settings for the association. Click on the 'Advanced' button. In the next box, select 'Open' from the list of actions and press the 'Edit...' button.



4 Point to the program

Make sure the file path in the 'Application used to perform action' box points to Internet Explorer and not some other application, and then press 'OK'. You can double-check this by pressing the 'Browse' button and finding IE using the file selector.



5 Do HTML as well

Repeat steps two through four for the 'HTML' extension in the lists of registered file types, and now click on the 'Close' button. If it doesn't update straight away, try restarting Windows.

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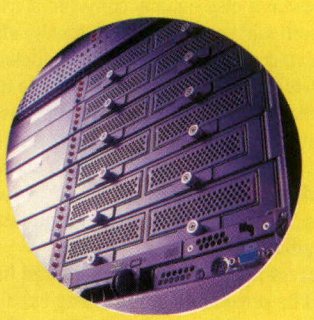

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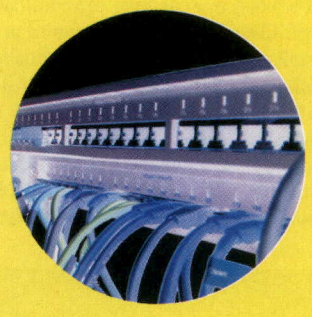

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Your Business Online

EXPERT ADVICE ON CREATING PROFITABLE SMALL BUSINESSES

Welcome...

A FEW YEARS ago, the word on the street was that applying for a job online was guaranteed to give you a much better chance. It showed you had mastered this new fangled technology, after all. Alas, the boom has gone out of online job-hunting, at least according to one survey, which claims you're much better off scanning the local paper on a Thursday instead. If you're on the lookout for a new job, don't stop sending the emails yet, just don't expect to automatically get the job of your dreams.

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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The law is changing for companies who want to use cookies on their sites

Will sites crumble under new cookie laws?

AS EUROPE GETS SET FOR STRICTER REGULATIONS ON THE USE OF COOKIES, A NEW SURVEY REVEALS THAT EBUSINESSES ARE TURNING A BLIND EYE TO THE BASIC LAWS

THE NET IS gearing up for a radical change in the way businesses are allowed to use cookies on their sites, but doubts are being raised over whether online firms will comply with the new regulations.

The changes come into effect at the end of October and are part of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, which requires companies by law to tell surfers about their use of cookies and how to block or remove them.

"The new law requires that a Web site operator clearly indicates to visitors that the site uses cookies or other tracking technologies and gives users the opportunity to reject them," explained Shelagh Gaskill, a partner with international law firm Masons (**www.masons.com**).

In light of a recent piece of research by online legal documents provider Clickdocs, there are question marks over the ability of eBusinesses to fall into line with the law.

The report revealed that most UK sites fail to comply with at least one basic legal requirement, with 95 percent of sites failing to provide a reasonable level of customer service, 63 percent breaching distance selling regulations and 72 percent falling down on requirements.

"Web site design and programming has improved enormously in the last few years. Our research highlights just how much effort has gone into ensuring sites look good and are easy to navigate," said Jon Aslin, Director of Clickdocs.

"It is therefore surprising and indeed disappointing that the small amount of time and investment that is required to address the basic commercial and legal basics has not been spent."

"THE WEB IS A BUSINESS-CRITICAL CHANNEL FOR OUR CUSTOMERS" DOMINIC MONKHOUSE

Another report has highlighted the need for Web hosting firms to improve their customer service levels. The research was conducted by Vanson Bourne on behalf of Rackspace Managed Hosting Europe (**www.rackspace.co.uk**), and found that there is a huge variation in the levels of service, with very basic functions like call handling falling short of the mark.

Dominic Monkhouse, managing director of Rackspace Managed Hosting Europe, which recorded a 100 percent satisfaction rating from its customers, said: "Good customer service is a massive issue in the Web hosting industry. The Web is a business-critical channel for our customers and we recognise the importance of providing customer service and support that ensures the sites we manage are accessible all the time."

News in brief

The host with the most

123-reg customers can now use Host Europe's free Webmail service. The service, which is already available to WebFusion customers, is available to anyone who has purchased a POP email box or a low cost Web hosting package through **123-reg.co.uk**. The Webmail service allows users to check their mail from anywhere in the world and supports POP3 and IMAP protocols, which means customers can access email sent to a 123-reg POP account.

Online marketing ads up

Companies are spending more money advertising online. According to the latest figures from Thomson Intermedia (www.thomson-intermedia.com), spending on Web ads in the second quarter rose eight percent compared to the first three months of the year. As the industry showed signs of improvement, online ad spending from the IT sector almost doubled compared with the first quarter. The biggest spender of the lot was BT, which spent around £4.28 million on Internet adverts.

eBay pays up

eBay (**www.ebay.com**) has been ordered to cough up $29.5 million to a former CIA engineer for infringing an eCommerce patent. US District Court Judge Jerome Friedman said that there was 'no dispute' that the online auction giant had breached the patent in question, which covers the way people make online bids backed by credit cards. Luckily for eBay, the judge refused to issue an injunction banning the company from continuing to use the technology, stating that there was insufficient evidence that its continued use would cause the patent holder further monetary damages.

The name game

Domain name holders are being warned their domain could be deleted if they fail to keep their contact details up to date. Nominet UK has announced that the registration of .uk domain names is to be renewed every two years. Domain registrar, Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk) warns that users must ensure their contact details are up to date. Ken Sorrie, the company's director, said: "Domain name holders need to be more vigilant than ever."

So it looks like it's back to the Job section in the local paper then...

Web woes for online job seekers

APPLYING ONLINE NO LONGER GIVES YOU THE ADVANTAGE WHEN YOU'RE JOB-HUNTING, ACCORDING TO NEW RESEARCH

THE DAYS WHEN it was easy to find a job online are now behind us, according to a new study.

Boffins at the University of Washington reckon it's time to start getting the job papers again, as the Web no longer gives you an advantage over other applicants.

Doctoral student Christine Fountain, who presented the results at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in Atlanta, says that it's become too easy for applicants to email a CV or apply through a site.

"Employers are becoming overwhelmed by a glut of resumes from applicants, and as the number of applications increase, the more employers may need to rely on recommendations from people who know applicants," she said.

"As employers continue to get huge stacks of job applicants, personal recommendations become more important as a way to distinguish between potential employees."

The research tracked a group of 650 unemployed people. Of the first batch of those who reported being unemployed in August 1998, those who used the Net were three percent more likely to find a job within three months than those who didn't.

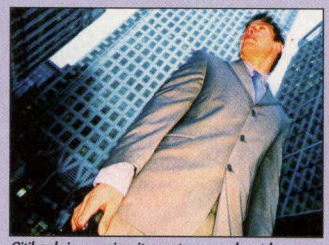
However, among the second group, who reported being out of work in December 2000, those who used the Net were three percent *less* likely to have found a job than non-users, a figure which Fountain says is statistically significant. Further information on the report is available from **www.washington.edu**.

Bank customers hit by email scam

CITIBANK WARNS BANKERS TO LOOK OUT FOR EMAIL FRAUD

EMAIL SCAMMERS ARE preying on customers of US personal finance giant Citibank (**www.citibank.com**).

The bank has confirmed that people have been receiving an email claiming to be from the Citibank, asking for their social security numbers. The message, which links to a page reminiscent of the real Citibank site, says that the terms and conditions of the account are changing and asks for verification.

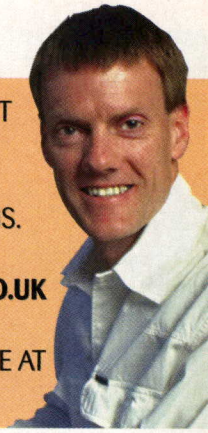


Citibank is warning its customers about bogus emails that are currently circulating

A Citibank spokesman said: "Although the email appears to come from Citibank, it does not, and Citibank is in no way involved in the distribution of this email."

The con is the latest in a succession of similar cases of 'phishing', whereby scamsters direct customers to fake sites in order to extract information from them. Citibank is advising customers who receive the message to delete it immediately and phone its Customer Services department.

Your Business Online Q&A



EVERY ISSUE, OUR RESIDENT EXPERT, **GERARD LISTON** FROM SMALLBIZ UK, ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS. CONTACT GERARD BY EMAILING **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** OR VISITING THE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE WEB SITE AT **WWW.YBOANSWERS.CO.UK**

THIS MONTH, KAREN GEE OFFERS BUSINESSES PRACTICAL TIPS AND ADVICE TO HELP THEM MEET THE CHALLENGE OF GETTING NEW CUSTOMERS

Q How do I get more customers?

The opinion poll which has run for the past few weeks in the 'Business Centre' on **www.yboanswers.co.uk** indicates that business people believe 'Sales and Marketing' is by far the most critical factor for small firms – outstripping cashflow, strategic planning and others. This interest in sales and marketing was repeated in one of the recent online 'Sounding Board' seminars held every month on the same Web site, under 'Coaching' in the 'Staff and Skills' channel. The seminar started like this:

A <Nick Stephens> How do I find out who needs my services?

<Karen Gee> Good question! What are your services, first of all?

<Nick Stephens> I help insurance companies and local companies to resolve their accounting problems.

<Karen Gee> Sounds interesting. So you already have customers, I take it?

<Jon> Of course.

<Nick Stephens> Yes, but I need more.

<Jeremy> Me too.

<Karen Gee> Yep, it's an all too common need.

Business coach and inspirational speaker Karen Gee offered a number of practical tips and suggestions to help meet the challenge of getting more customers:

<Karen Gee> The question you need to ask yourself is do you want more customers in these same categories or new customer types?

<Nick Stephens> There are plenty of potential customers in these main types. I just need to know how to get to them when they have a need.

<Karen Gee> Okay – firstly it sounds to me like you're already doing it, otherwise you wouldn't have any customers! Ask yourself what you did to get the customers you already have, and create a model of processes you went through.

<Nick Stephens> Yes but if they don't have a requirement at present, then I need to find new ones that do.

<Karen Gee> As far as getting to people when they have a need, I think you have to tell people about yourself and exactly how you can help them BEFORE they need it.

<Nick Stephens> The customers I have came from personal recommendation.

<Karen Gee> Great – that's the perfect marketing tool – the referral system. Do you ask people for referrals or do they just do it voluntarily?

<Nick Stephens> Some are voluntary, but I also ask for them.

<Karen Gee> Sounds to me like you've got a system that's working at a particular level, but what I'm hearing is that you want it to work harder. Is that really what's going on here, Nick?

<Nick Stephens> Yes.

<Karen Gee> Aha, thought so!

<Karen Gee> Okay, if you keep doing exactly the same thing you'll get exactly the same results. If you want a different outcome you need to change your approach.

<Karen Gee> If I was you I'd try two or three different new things and see how they work. Want some examples?

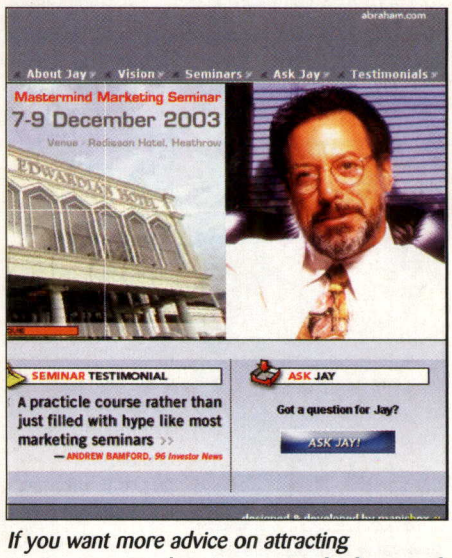
<Nick Stephens> Yes please.

<Karen Gee> Introduce a more structured referral system with some sort of 'thank you' for the referrer, so that they get something from it. For more ideas on this, listen to Tony Robbins interview Jay Abraham in his powertalk at **www.jayabraham.co.uk**. Also…

<Karen Gee> Instead of sending out 'selling' mailshots, why not create a newsletter – sometimes mailshots can be rather harsh. Make the copy very problem-solving. Also…

<Karen Gee> Use the Net to publish and promote your skills. I think that people want to do business with people who can really help deal with their biz challenges.

At its most basic, 'marketing' is about identifying and meeting the needs of your customers. While it is tempting to focus on ways of meeting the needs of your business, successful selling will only really happen when you manage to see things from their perspective.



If you want more advice on attracting customers, pop along to **www.jayabraham.co.uk**

How we built MoneySupermarket.com

MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL FINANCES CAN BE AS DULL AS A NIGHT OUT WITH STEVE DAVIS, YET MONEYSUPERMARKET.COM HAS MANAGED TO EXCITE VISITORS WITH ITS PRODUCT COMPARISON SERVICES. **JAMES THORNTON** FINDS OUT HOW IT WAS DONE

They say that money makes the world go round, and while knowalls like Steven Hawking would argue that it's more to do with the sun's gravitational pull, the metaphor is becoming increasingly apt in today's commercialised society.

As the public's demand for collateral grows stronger, financial institutions are gleefully filling their boots by offering all manner of 'unbeatable' rates on loans, credit cards, mortgages and savings accounts. The dawn of the Internet has made it possible for virtually anyone to start their own online bank, and consequently we're left to choose between an impossible range of different products, services and rates from a range of institutions. You can almost guarantee that as soon as you take out a credit card, some smart-alec will come along and brag about how much better the one they've got is – such is the nature of the crowded and confusing personal finance market.

Simon Nixon, MoneySupermarket's pioneering CEO, plans new ventures

Cottoning on to the idea that people don't have the first clue about finding the best finance deals for their needs, MoneySupermarket.com was launched at the back end of 1999 as a means for consumers to quickly compare a comprehensive range of financial products before buying online.

While this might sound like a thankless task, the company's CEO, Simon Nixon, points out that the site had inherited most of its core content, which made life much easier.

"The interface for MoneySupermarket.com was already in existence from our parent company, Mortgage 2000 – a leading product information provider for the mortgage broker industry," he says.

"It was merely a case of transferring the mortgage product information that was given to the mortgage brokers on a CD each year into a consumer-facing Web site and using that template to create loan and credit card finders."

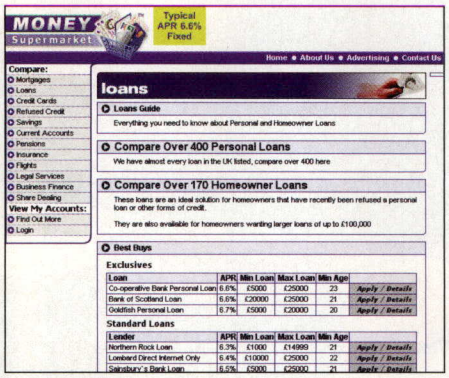
Money matters

Since hitting upon the idea of using the Internet as a means of research for financial products, Nixon has seen his company grow to become the UK's largest personal finance aggregator, and the 11th largest financial site in Britain. He is quick to stress that MoneySupermarket is now one of the biggest employers in the Chester area, and as well as growing as a business, the company has improved its customer offering no end. The site now serves up 29 different types of product comparison tools, and has undergone a series of overhauls to make it more user friendly.

Nixon explains: "The site has been developed over time and through experience of knowing what drives traffic and sales, particularly experience of making it work for partner sites – you build on top of what you learn each time. MoneySupermarket.com has also worked with usability specialists to make sure the site is even more user-friendly. The front page was improved significantly about a year ago, and since then the site has become even more successful."

Although the company has been diversifying somewhat of late, its flagship loan and credit card channels are still the biggest hits with the site's 150,000 or so monthly users.

"They are successful because of the simple fact that it's easier for consumers to apply for credit anonymously over the Internet than it is walking into a branch or over the telephone," says Nixon. "I think it's also because they are low ticket items (ie low financial commitment), the consumer can get a credit card sent to them but not need to use it. That's why applying for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Home • About Us • Advertising • Contact Us
Compare:
Mortgages
Loans
Credit Cards
Refused Credit
Savings
Current Accounts
Pensions
Insurance
Flights
Legal Services
Business Finance
Share Dealing
View My Accounts:
Find Out More
Login
loans
Loans Guide
Everything you need to know about Personal and Homeowner Loans
Compare Over 400 Personal Loans
We have almost every loan in the UK listed, compare over 400 here
Compare Over 170 Homeowner Loans
These loans are an ideal solution for homeowners that have recently been refused a personal loan or other forms of credit.
They are also available for homeowners wanting larger loans of up to £100,000
Best Buys
Exclusives
Loan | APR | Min Loan | Max Loan | Min Age
Co-operative Bank Personal Loan | 6.6% | £5000 | £25000 | 23 | Apply / Details
Bank of Scotland Loan | 6.6% | £20000 | £25000 | 21 | Apply / Details
Goldfish Personal Loan | 6.7% | £5000 | £20000 | 20 | Apply / Details
Standard Loans
Lender | APR | Min Loan | Max Loan | Min Age
Northern Rock Loan | 6.7% | £1000 | £14999 | 21 | Apply / Details
Lombard Direct Internet Only | 6.4% | £10000 | £25000 | 22 | Apply / Details
Sainsbury's Bank Loan | 6.5% | £5000 | £25000 | 21 | Apply / Details

InsureSupermarket.com offers viewers the chance to examine the difference in loan rates between direct companies

The MoneyTelegraph became one of the first sites to be powered by MoneySupermarket, allowing customers to view their finances

ThisisMoney also teamed up with MoneySupermarket to provide viewers with a 'best buy' product section for better value

loans and credit cards is so successful on the Internet – you can get credit anonymously."

Milking the cash cow

It's all very well being a good Samaritan and showing people what to do with their cash, but how does MoneySupermarket.com make its money? More than 90 percent of its revenue comes from the introduction fees it charges the product providers when a customer takes out a loan, credit card, current account, etc after going through the site. For instance, if a customer is researching credit cards and ends up taking an Egg card, then Egg will pay a fee to MoneySupermarket.com.

The company also offers its services to a range of top UK sites such as Yahoo!, BT, The Times, Freeserve and Lycos, which it calls its 'portal partners', who take a cut of the commission if a sale is generated through the portal.

Nixon enthuses: "Most of our portal partners have received generous revenue streams from the product comparison tools, and all of our partners have been extremely positive about what the comparison tools offer their consumers – which is a choice of the whole market and the best deals including exclusive products with market-leading rates.

"WE'RE KEEN TO ACQUIRE NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND OPEN UP NEW MARKETS" SIMON NIXON

MoneySupermarket is also proving adept at farming out its technology to Web sites so they can offer their customers leading-edge financial services that they wouldn't get elsewhere. A case in point is the recent deals struck with ThisisMoney (**www.thisismoney.co.uk**) and MoneyTelegraph (**www.money.telegraph.co.uk**), which became the first portals in the UK to have their own-brand account aggregation systems, powered by MoneySupermarket. The comparative account aggregation technology allows the site's customers to view all their personal finance accounts and information on one page, along with a list of 'best buy' products that may offer better value.

"I think ThisisMoney and MoneyTelegraph are ideal for an account aggregation audience. Users of both sites are Web savvy, have higher than average incomes and are probably used to using the Internet to shop around for financial products," says Nixon.

Flights of fancy

The beauty of MoneySupermarket's intelligent search technology is that it can be applied to virtually any product available online. This has enabled the company to begin experimenting in areas away from the financial sector, such as the new 'Flight Finder', which will allow users to get away from it all for the cheapest possible price by comparing fares from the likes of Easyjet, Expedia, Opodo, Ryanair and BA. While the company is very much testing the waters in these new areas, Simon Nixon is confident Flight Finder will take off.

"We're testing to see whether it will work and are still very much in test mode, but our USP is that we will compare the entire market, including brokers, aggregators and direct airline sites," he says.

"This is something no other Web site can do because they don't have the intelligent search technology that we have at our disposal."

Among the other spin-offs from the site is InsureSupermarket.com, which allows visitors to compare direct insurers against brokers on one page, and Nixon is keen for the firm not to rest on laurels. Though much of his attention is on the launch of a new travel site, he stresses the importance of not getting ahead of yourself and taking time to shape the business. "TravelSupermarket.com is the next Web site to launch," he beams. "There are also a host of other ideas in the pipeline, including European expansion plans. It's a very exciting time for the company and we're keen to acquire new partnerships and open up new markets, but we're taking it one step at a time." ■

Site stats

MONEYSUPERMARKET
www.moneysupermarket.com

- **Who designed it?**
  In-house
- **Software used?**
  Internet Information Server 5.0 using ASP 3.0 running on Windows 2000 Server. Database created using SQL Server 200 Enterprise running on Windows 2000 Advanced Server. Site developed using Macromedia HomeSite and Microsoft Visual Studio
- **Time taken?**
  Four months
- **Number of employees in the beginning?**
  30
- **Number of employees now?**
  Over 220
- **Number of unique users?**
  150,000 per month
- **Number of unique users through portal sites?**
  750,000 per month
- **Number of product comparison tools?**
  29

TIMESCALE

November 1990 – The site's parent company, Mortgage 2000 is launched, providing customers with product information about mortgages

August 1999 – The idea for an online financial product comparison service is first hatched by Simon Nixon

December 1999 – MoneySupermarket.com goes live, allowing customers to compare loans and credit cards

July 2002 – Following several redesigns to make the site easier to navigate, a new front page is created, which increases the popularity of the site

August 2003 – ThisisMoney.co.uk and Telegraph.co.uk choose MoneySupermarket to power their new own-brand account aggregation systems – a first for a British portal

Create the perfect email newsletter

DELIVER PROMOTION FOR YOUR SITE DIRECT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS' INBOX, THE LEGAL WAY. **HAL DEVLIN** GIVES YOU THE LOWDOWN ON NEWSLETTERS

The best Web sites are dynamic, filled with information that updates on a regular basis. This is good business for lots of reasons. It increases the number of return visits to your site as people check for changes. If you don't stand still people will know you're serious – your site's dynamism will reflect well on your business. If you're already generating the content then there's an extra step you can take. You can deliver that content direct to people's mailboxes.

Let's be up front about this – most advertising on the Web doesn't work. Users see it as obtrusive, even irritating. It gets in the way of what they're doing and what they're doing is looking for information. What if you could turn the tables and instead of advertising your site in a random manner, you became an information provider? The Web was founded on the principal that information would be free. Many of the earliest commercial enterprises to venture online didn't get this very basic premise – but you can turn it to your advantage. A commercial newsletter or ezine delivers your message direct. It's something that people can willingly opt into, and that will in return generate a steady stream of hits back to your site.

Just the facts

On a purely practical level, a newsletter is an email that you send out to a list of customers on a regular basis. You may choose to send it weekly or monthly, but it should be sent to your customers regularly on a predictable schedule. We'll be discussing the kinds of content you might put into a newsletter throughout this article, but most of it will be governed largely by the kind of business you run. Newsletters are most definitely not advertisements. They promote your services in a variety of ways but, as far as your customer is concerned, this should appear secondary to the information you provide.

If you have a site that updates on a regular basis you already have a fairly good source of information with which to fill your newsletter, but that's just a start. You'll want to give your customers an incentive to visit your site – so your newsletter needs to offer something different to the site itself. You may choose to highlight specific updates or news on your site or draw your users attention to other resources. For example, you may have a new item in stock and include links to favourable reviews in your newsletter.

You'll need a database of contacts to distribute your newsletter to. No problem, you might think, I'll fire it off to my existing customers. Before you start harvesting email addresses from those old files think about how annoyed you get when you receive unsolicited email. Junk email, or spam, is outlawed in the US and many other countries – even though it still keeps coming. A European law, the Privacy and Communications Directive, will become law over here in October. This will make sure UK businesses can only legally send email to users who have agreed to receiving correspondence from them. The Advertising Standards Authority in the UK issued similar guidelines in March.

Even if it weren't illegal, sending junk mail is a self-defeating exercise for legitimate businesses. Any goodwill you might seek to foster is destroyed the moment you bung up someone's inbox with mail they didn't ask for.

Start from scratch

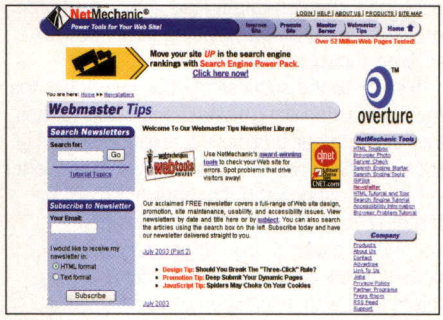
The answer is to start at the bottom and build up a database of willing subscribers. Whether you handle the mailing list yourself or use a third party site to do it, there will be some form of registration process required. Make sure you have a checkbox or link that asks users to opt in. In accompanying text, sell the benefits of signing up – let your customers know that they'll be getting something valuable for free if they sign up. Perhaps have a link to a sample that pops up in a new window so your punters can see what's on offer.

Producing your newsletter is going to take some work, but there are tried and tested rules that should help you minimise mistakes. For example, first impressions really do count. Your customers may have opted to receive your newsletter, but the title you put on the subject line may determine whether it gets read or deleted. You want to be noticed and make the mail seem valuable, but you don't want to oversell either. Using terms like 'free' in the subject field or making outlandish claims like 'our products will make you more sexy!' are guaranteed to get binned. Think sober, functional and informative. Some users even automatically filter out exclamation marks.

"EVEN IF IT WEREN'T ILLEGAL, SENDING JUNK MAIL IS A SELF-DEFEATING EXERCISE"

The subject line should ideally contain the name of your newsletter first, followed by an issue number or the date. This instantly makes the mail seem more like a magazine, something with informative content rather than a promotional item. After that, you can try a short line about the content of the newsletter. Something like: "Computer Game News: No. 113 – Quake 4 Announced/E3 Report". Notice that we've formatted the line as though it's a title. Again, you're after the impression of professionalism and value rather than trying to grab attention in an obvious way.

List your main points in bullet form so it is easier for the reader to glance and decide whether they want more


NetMechanic®
Power Tools for Your Web Site!
Move your site UP in the search engine rankings with Search Engine Power Pack.
Click here now!
Webmaster Tips
overture
Search Newsletters
Subscribe to Newsletter

Give your customers the option of subscribing to the newsletter, but also to unsubscribe should they wish to

Develop your own tone

When you come to actually write the content of your newsletter you have several decisions to make before starting – and setting the appropriate tone is one of the most important. Do you want to sound chatty and conversational or keep things dry and more detached? The answer will depend on the subject matter of the newsletter – but in most cases keeping a balance between the two is the best route. If you're catering for a consumer market, a personal tone may work – but don't make it too personal; you're running a business, not writing to a pen pal. You can retain some distance by writing in the second person, referring to your reader as 'you' and yourself as 'we'. In professional markets or business-to-business environments you may wish to adopt a more 'just the facts' approach.

In either case, keep things simple. Stick to the points you want to make and steer clear of descriptive flourishes and purple prose. Most importantly of all, check your finished letter for spelling and grammatical errors. Microsoft has a grammar checker built in and most email programs can handle spell checking. Get a friend to read through it as well.

Relevant content

Your newsletter exists to call attention to your Web site, so much of the material you present in it will be drawn from there. You'll want to alert customers to changes on your site, new stock or services and in turn this content will direct you customers back to you, hopefully to spend more. Try to give your customers something they can't get directly from your site too. A way to do this is to address a problem they might have or satisfy a potential need. Make it relevant to your business or service and you have a direct method of promoting your site without appearing to advertise. For example, if you were running a ➔

Do's and don'ts

Don't

1. Send unsolicited mail. It's against ASA regulations and will be in contravention of European law by October.
2. Use complex HTML formatting in your newsletters. Stick to plain text or simple layouts.
3. Fill your message with images. They take longer to download and make your newsletter look like spam.
4. Use advertising clichés in your headlines.
5. Go on too long. If you make your users scroll through too much text they'll get bored and bin it.

Do

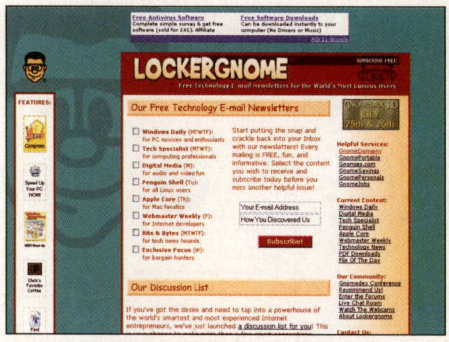
1. Give your customers the chance to opt-in to your newsletter. Sell the benefit of making the choice.
2. Make sure the content of your newsletter is relevant to your customers. Categorise your content to if your services are broad.
3. Link back to your Web site to get the most value from the newsletter.
4. Put your newsletter's main news story on the front page of your Web site with a heading that says 'in this week's newsletter' to give your customers a taste of the content.
5. Put a subscription link to your newsletter on every page on your site.

personals site you might lead your newsletter off with a brief article advising users how to revamp their profiles.

It's key to the success of your newsletter that the information you provide is relevant to their interests. If your business is broad in scope, then you have two choices with your newsletter – you can either keep that equally broad, or target specific groups of users. The first solution is easier to do – if you have a consumer electronics site, for example, you might lead with a selection of short reviews, without concentrating on several areas. Depending on the size of your business it may make more sense to create a series of newsletters – your goal is to hold the reader's interest after all.

Don't forget to promote

Ultimately, you're setting out to promote your business, so finding ways to highlight your business name, your site URL and your branding is important. An ideal format is to lead with a short article followed by a series of bullet points highlighting recent changes to your site. If the article fulfils a customer need or solves a problem, as we suggested, then it would be natural to include a link back to your site. After the 'lead' piece you can follow up with a series of bulleted news items – updates to your site. Whichever you choose, each item can come with its own link. At the top of the newsletter you have the opportunity to plug yourself again. Along with the title of the newsletter you can prominently feature the URL to your site. The footer of the email gives you yet another opportunity. Using a simple format, you can promote your site and offer



Keep it simple, stupid – make your newsletter layout easy to read and pleasing on the eye, you're sure to grab their attention

the user the chance to connect to it over and over, without seeming to oversell the point.

Although most email clients display HTML formatted mail, the consensus is that you should keep formatting down to a minimum. Using HTML seems inviting, allowing you to include images and fancy formatting, but user surveys show people prefer to receive plain text. To please as many users as possible, you can't beat plain text. You can format your newsletter in plain text and include hyperlinks within the document. Most mail readers will retain the links live in HTML format. Those that don't will simply render the links as text that can be pasted into a browser. If you prefer the look of an HTML style newsletter, consider this alternative: go with plain formatting but insert HTML headers and footers in your page. These could include your logo formatted as a link back to your site, providing your newsletter with some strong branding. Make sure you fill the 'ALT' parameter for the IMG tag so that the code depreciates gracefully. ■

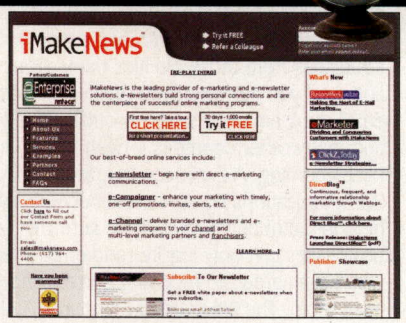
Publishling your newsletter

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GREAT IDEAS – YOU ALSO NEED SOFTWARE TO PUBLISH YOUR EMAILS

WHEN YOU'VE DONE all the hard work of collecting names and creating your first newsletter, then you'll have to distribute it. It's ironic that in order to legitimately promote your site you'll end up using some of the tools and techniques used by spammers – bulk email. You should be able to send email to multiple recipients direct from a Word Processing package that has a Mail Merge feature. In Microsoft Word you can compose your newsletter in plain text then select 'Tools > Mail Merge' to open a Datasource, such as an Access database filled with your customers details. When you finish setting up the source, click on the 'Merge' button and select 'Electronic Mail' from the drop-down menu in the dialog that appears. In the 'Setup' section you'll be able to specify which field program should look for email addresses. One advantage of using Mail Merge is that you can personalise your newsletter to the recipient by placing a merge field in your text.

There are dedicated bulk email programs that perform similar functions if you don't have access to MS Word, or if you'd like an easier interface. Group Mail Free from **www.infacta.com** is a special version of Group Mail Pro. It's freeware, but full of features. Unfortunately this version doesn't support true 'bulk email' – it will send each of the users on your list your newsletter individually. For $79.95 (around £50) you can upgrade to the pro version, which does support true bulk email.

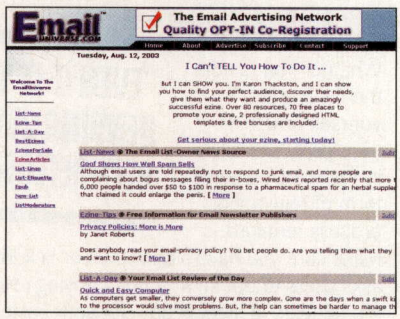
Web resources



I Make News

www.imakenews.com

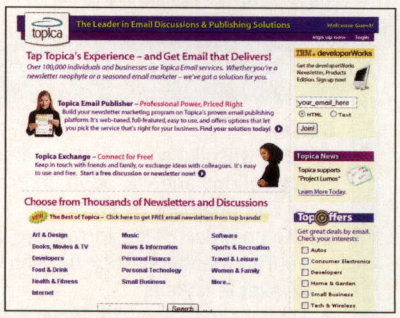
With a 30-day free trial, this site helps you to manage every aspect of your newsletter. Using a template-based system you can create your newsletter online, using syndicated content sources, then deliver the result direct to your customers.



Email Universe

www.emailuniverse.com

It's a commercial site plugging a book about promoting yourself online, but it's full of great tips and tricks on making the most of your email newsletter. There's even free content…



Topica

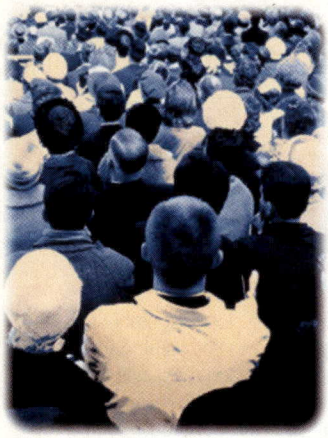
www.topica.com

There's not as much support as 'I Make News', but Topica allows you to create your own free mailing list that you can distribute your newsletter through. Once created, it'll be featured in Topica's directory too.

Site-Report.com

... BECAUSE FEEDBACK IS VITAL

Find out what **REAL PEOPLE** think of your website



'This service was vital for not only making my website more understandable but also creating a more user friendly business model. I can't recommend this service highly enough!'

LogoVend.com©

CD WOW! www.cd-wow.com

'Although we run a very successful online business it's always good to get outside feedback. Survival is about adapting your business to the customers needs. Site-Report.com allowed us to do just that!'

'When we decided to use Site-Report we were sceptical of the feedback we were going to receive. But the reports that came back were thoughtful and proved extremely useful in the way real users see the site.'

DVD OPTIONS

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Speed-up your business

Broadband Internet access for your business

If you're in business you'll know the importance of having a fast reliable Internet connection. With Giacom Broadband, not only is our service one of the best in the UK, our prices are hard to beat. Choose from our Office Solo range if you're a home worker or using a single PC, whilst the Office Express Broadband range allows you to connect your entire office network with up to 40 PCs to the Internet through a single ADSL Broadband connection.

Tariffs

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• 50:1 Contention Ratio • 512 Kbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 50:1 Contention Ratio • 1 Mbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 50:1 Contention Ratio • 2 Mbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address
£26.99 plus VAT and set up	**£39.99 plus VAT and set up**	**£59.99 plus VAT and set up**
Office Express 500	**Office Express 1000**	**Office Express 2000**
• 20:1 Contention Ratio • 512 Kbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 20:1 Contention Ratio • 1 Mbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 20:1 Contention Ratio • 2 Mbps download • 256Kbps upload • Static IP address
£ 39.99 plus VAT and set up	**£59.99 plus VAT and set up**	**£84.99 plus VAT and set up**

Call 0800 542 7500 or visit www.giacom.net

GIACOM

All prices subject to VAT at 17.5 per cent. Connection fee applies at £49.99. Estimated installation time is currently 10 days. Giacom Broadband is a service by Giacom World Networks Limited - www.giacom.com.

ADSL Broadband

In brief:
Task: Manage your site with Contribute 2
Software I need: Contribute 2
Difficulty: It's much easier than you think
Time I need: As long as you like

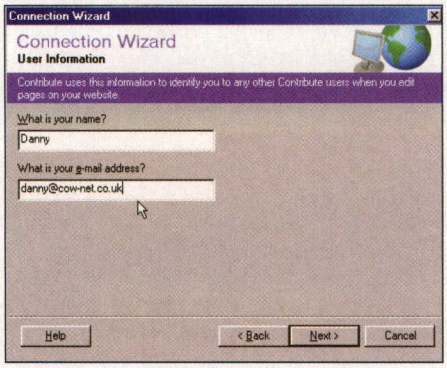
Manage your site with Contribute 2

UPDATE PAGES IN AN INSTANT AND TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR SITE'S DEVELOPMENT WITH THE LATEST VERSION OF MACROMEDIA'S MANAGEMENT TOOL

BUILDING SITES ISN'T always a solitary business. Even if it's just you and your client, it's still useful to have some form of administration tool, so you can set up easy access to parts of the site for which they're responsible, while keeping them from twiddling with parts they shouldn't touch.

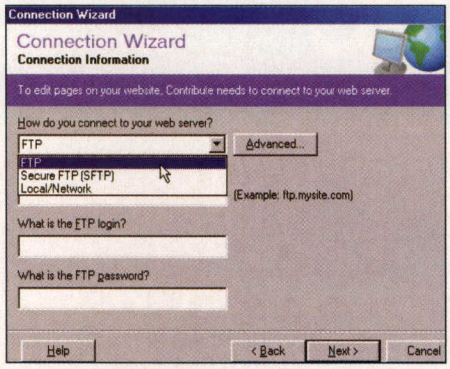
Contribute can do this for you, and is less costly than some more complicated site-management software. For example, you can set up an account for your client so they can make changes to text or add new pages based upon pre-defined Dreamweaver templates that you set up. By doing this you can feel confident that none of the critical scripts or layout structure will be accidentally destroyed by curious business folk with a penchant for clicking.

Even if you're working alone, Contribute is useful. There may be times you want to review your site using a browser and make quick changes without repeatedly downloading, editing and uploading pages. With Contribute you can do this or update content in seconds without opening your authoring package or FTP client. There are also some great new tools for adding content.



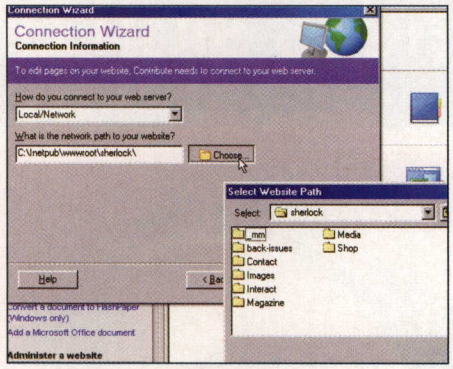
1 Connect to your site

On the Start page, click on the 'Create a Connection' link to begin setting up Contribute to work on your site. In the second step of the Connection wizard, enter your name and email address, then press the 'Next' button.



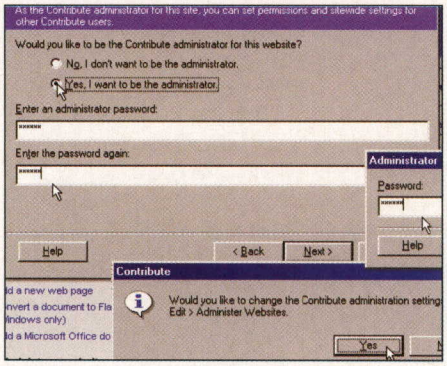
2 Network connections

In the subsequent step you'll need to add your URL. Press 'Browse' to search for the site, or enter it into the box. Click on 'Next' again and choose your connection type. Normally, this is 'FTP', but for an Intranet site pick 'Local/Network'.



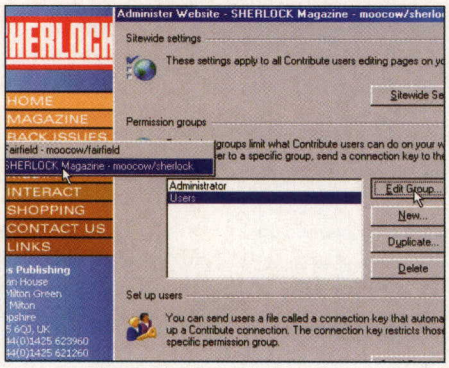
3 Setting server details

In the boxes that appear below, enter the address of your FTP server, and the login username and password. If you're editing an Intranet site, you need only enter the site's directory. Press 'Choose…' to find it, or enter it directly.


Would you like to be the Contribute administrator for this website?
No, I don't want to be the administrator.
Yes, I want to be the administrator.
Enter an administrator password:
Enter the password again:
Administrator
Password:
Help
< Back
Next >
Contribute
Would you like to change the Contribute administration setting
Edit > Administer Websites.
Yes

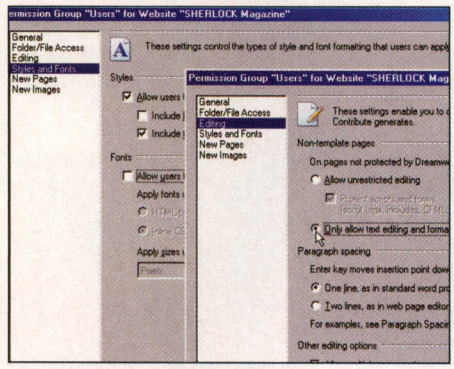
4 Be the administrator

Pick the option to be the site's administrator then enter your password. Click on 'Next' again, check the details and press 'Done'. You will be prompted to change the administration settings for this site. Choose 'Yes' and now enter your new password.



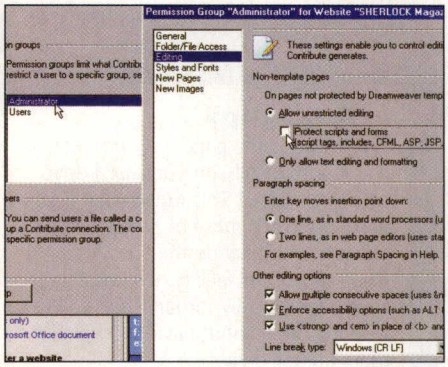
5 Add a user

As the administrator, you can add new users. Select 'Administer Websites' from the 'Edit' menu and choose your site from the sub-menu. Enter your password and press 'OK'. Highlight the 'Users' group and press 'Edit Group…'.



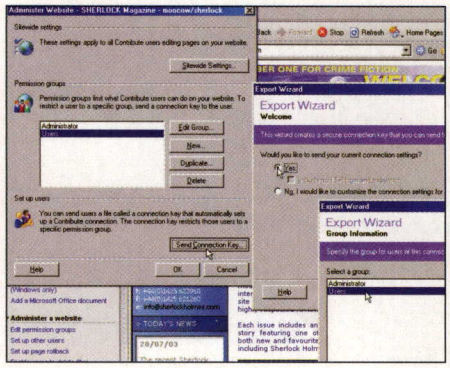
6 Setting permissions

In this dialog you can set which elements can be altered by your users. For example, the 'Editing' section lets you restrict twiddling to only changing text. Flip over to 'Styles and Fonts' to ensure your users stick to your site style sheets.


Permission Group "Administrator" for Website "SHERLOCK Maga
General
Folder/File Access
Editing
Styles and Fonts
New Pages
New Images
These settings enable you to control editi
Contribute generates.
Non-template pages
On pages not protected by Dreamweaver temp
Allow unrestricted editing
Protect scripts and forms
Script tags, includes, CFML, ASP, JSP
Only allow text editing and formatting
Paragraph spacing
Enter key moves insertion point down:
One line, as in standard word processors
Two lines, as in web page editors
For examples, see Paragraph Spacing in Help.
Other editing options
Allow multiple consecutive spaces
Enforce accessibility options
Line break type: Windows (CR LF)

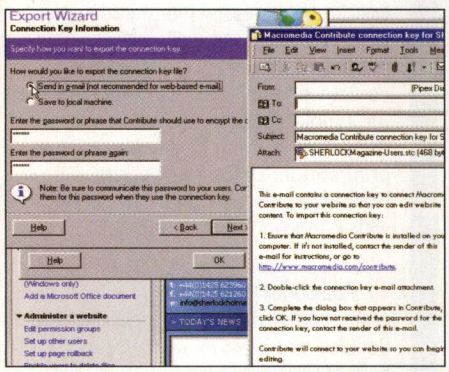
7 Additional admin edits

As the Administrator, you might want to edit more than the default settings allow. Select the 'Administrator' group and press 'Edit Group…'. Remove the tick next to 'Protect scripts and forms' to alter these elements from within Contribute.



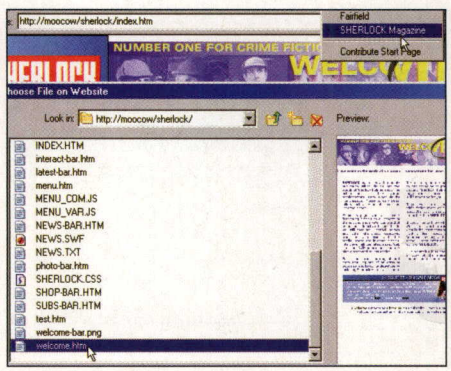
8 Sending a key

To manage your user access more easily, you can send a key with site settings pre-configured. Push the 'Send Connection Key…' button, choose 'Yes' in the Export Wizard. In the next dialog pick the 'Users' group and now click 'Next'.


Export Wizard
Connection Key Information
Macromedia Contribute connection key for S
How would you like to export the connection key file?
Send in e-mail (not recommended for web-based e-mail)
Save to local machine
Enter the password or phrase that Contribute should use to encrypt the c
Enter the password or phrase again:
Note: Be sure to communicate this password to your users. Cor
them for this password when they use the connection key.
Help
< Back
Next >
Help
OK
(Windows only)
Add a Microsoft Office document
Administer a website
Edit permission groups
Set up other users
Set up page rollback
TODAY'S NEWS
To:
Subject: Macromedia Contribute connection key for S
Attach: SHERLOCKMagazine-Users.stc (468 by
This e-mail contains a connection key to connect Macrom
Contribute to your website so that you can edit website
content. To import this connection key:
1. Ensure that Macromedia Contribute is installed on you
computer. If it's not installed, contact the sender of this
e-mail for instructions, or go to
http://www.macromedia.com/contribute.
2. Double-click the connection key e-mail attachment.
3. Complete the dialog box that appears in Contribute,
click OK. If you have not received the password for the
connection key, contact the sender of this e-mail.
Contribute will connect to your website so you can begin
editing.

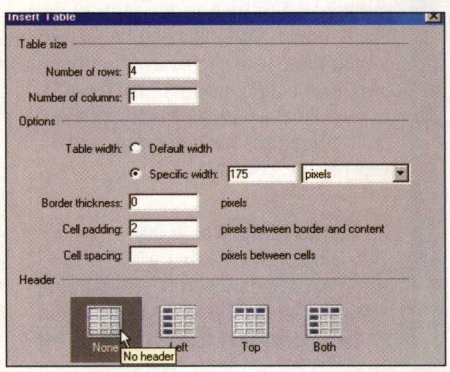
9 Logging on with a key

With the 'Send in e-mail' option selected, enter a password for your user. Press 'Next' followed by 'Done'. An email will be created with a connection key attached. Enter your recipient and send it.



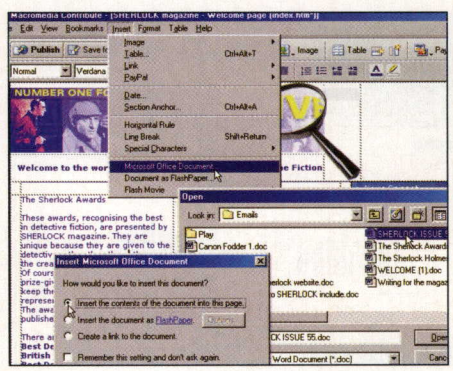
10 Browsing your site files

Once you've set up a site you can move around as you would with IE6. If your site is not visible, click the 'Home Pages' button and choose it from the menu. You can also load any HTML page by clicking the 'Choose…' button.



11 Exploring the Edit tools

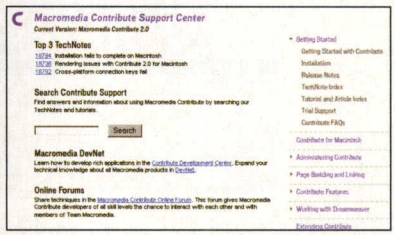
To change the page you're viewing, push the 'Edit' button. Assuming you have permissions, you can edit the text or add new images using the top toolbar. Table creation and formatting tools are available, in case you need to change a layout.


Insert Microsoft Office Document
How would you like to insert this document?
Insert the contents of the document into this page.
Insert the document as FlashPaper.
Create a link to the document.
Remember this setting and don't ask again.
Open
Look in: Emails
Word Document (*.doc)

12 Adding Office documents

As well as basic editing facilities, Contribute can import Excel spreadsheets or Word documents. Select 'Microsoft Office Document…' from the Insert menu and pick your file. In the dialog, select the option to 'Insert the Contents of the document…'.

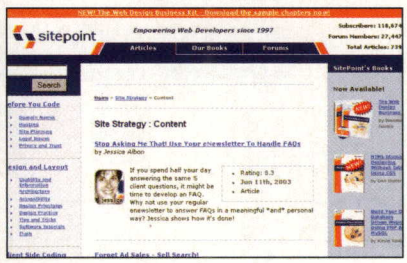
Web resources



Macromedia Contribute support

www.macromedia.com/support/contribute

For up-to-date information on using the program, or to take advantage of a special upgrade offer from version 1.0 to 2.0, visit the official support site for Contribute on the Macromedia portal. There is also some fantastic information available for extending Contribute with new commands of your own.



Sitepoint

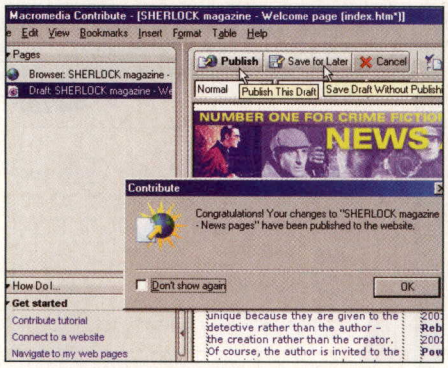
www.sitepoint.com/subcat/102

For a more general read on site management, administration and content strategies (and sundry other business-speak terms for keeping your pages fresh), have a look at the articles on Sitepoint.

Power users' tip

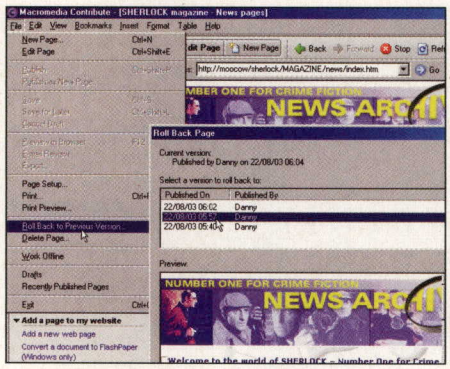
THE USE OF PayPal has increased substantially over the past year or so, principally because it enables small online enterprises to set up a means of selling their goods without the need for expensive or complicated secure servers. It's also very popular with consumers, who can use it to pay for goods in different currencies. The new version of Contribute includes tools to add PayPal functionality to your site. The only thing you need do beforehand is set up a merchant account with PayPal. To add any of the items to a page, push 'PayPal' in the main toolbar when you're in Edit mode, pick the type of button you want from the pull-down menu and follow the step-by-step wizard.

Your Business Online
Workshop


Macromedia Contribute - [SHERLOCK magazine - Welcome page (index.htm*)]
Publish
Save for Later
Cancel
Contribute
Congratulations! Your changes to "SHERLOCK magazine - News pages" have been published to the website.
Don't show again
OK

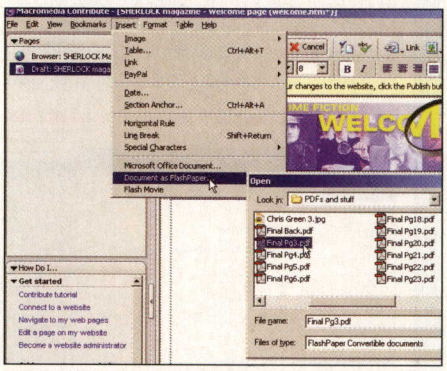
13 Publishing your changes

Once you've made your changes, you have two options. You can save a draft to your local drive, or can publish the update immediately. From the top toolbar choose either 'Save for Later' or 'Publish' to do one or the other.



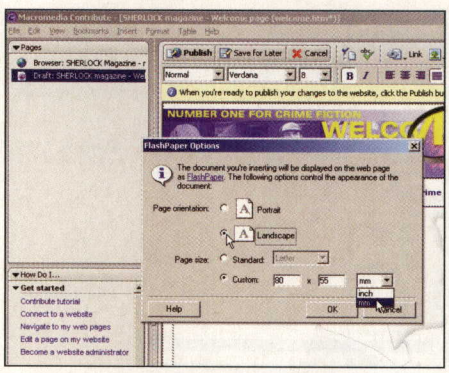
14 Performing a roll-back

Contribute stores a handful of backup pages, in case you need to revert to an original. Click the 'File' menu and choose 'Roll Back to Previous Version...'. Now choose the backup you want (it will be previewed below) and press 'Roll Back'.



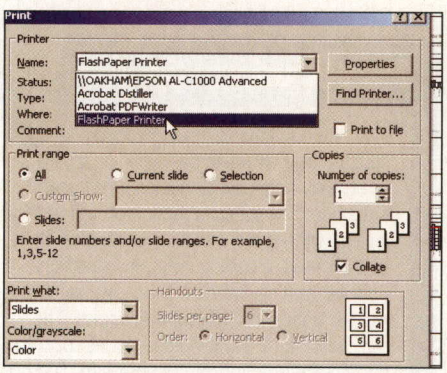
15 Create a FlashPaper

A neat way of adding a document is the new FlashPaper tool. Position the cursor where you want to add your Office document, click on the 'Insert' menu and choose 'Document as FlashPaper...', then find and load your document.



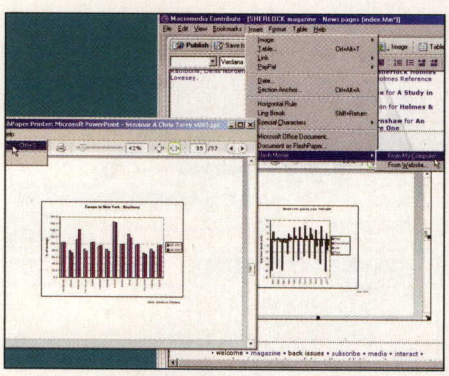
16 Size and orientation

Select the page orientation most suitable to your document, and choose either a standard page size or 'Custom'. If you choose the latter, enter the document's page in millimetres or inches and press 'OK' to convert. Now insert your document.



17 Printing to FlashPaper

Another way to utilise the FlashPaper facility is from within your document-creation software. Instead of using your normal printer, choose 'FlashPaper Printer' from the Printer Options dialog box and print the file.



18 Importing SWF movies

Choose 'Save...' from the FlashPaper File menu to save your document as an SWF file. Swap back to Contribute, and open the page you want to edit. Position the cursor, then select 'Flash Movie' from the Insert menu to paste it into your page.

Jargon buster

Draft copy

When you edit a page in Contribute, it is stored locally on your hard drive as a 'draft copy'. This means that if you make a terrible mess of it you won't affect the original on the site. Also, using the Drafts facility, it's possible to save pages locally for later that you're working on, without having to upload them immediately.

FlashPaper

FlashPaper essentially works like a printer driver, converting any Office document (whether it's a Word file, PowerPoint slides or Publisher pages), PDF or picture into a Flash movie, so that it may be easily integrated into your Web page. As well as the document, FlashPaper documents contain a panel at the top with controls for jumping between pages in the document, a zoom facility and even a print button. Unfortunately, the FlashPaper printer driver only works with Windows XP or 2000.

Administrator

A site administrator is the person who decides and governs who else can connect and edit files on a Web site. He or she usually has full access privileges, and is also the person responsible for maintaining the site and its database of users.

SWF

Short for Shockwave Flash, this is the published and Web-ready form of a Flash movie. SWF files can be viewed on a Web page with the use of the free Flash plug-in. FlashPaper documents are essentially SWF movies with additional built-in features for navigating and viewing the contents.

Connection key

This is a special file that will automatically configure Contribute for other users. Connection keys contain all the information that is required for logging onto a server (without disseminating confidential password information) and granting permission to alter certain aspects of the pages within that server. To use a connection key, users only need to double-click on the file.

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- No minimum contract
- No connection fee
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- 80,000 News Servers
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Pick the perfect Web hosting deal

USE THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SELECT THE PERFECT HOME FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

SELECTING A WEB hosting company to look after your business is just as tricky as picking the right ISP to connect you to the Internet. There's a baffling array of deals to choose from, each offering slightly different services and each charging slightly different prices. In short, there's no simple answer.

Our aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included (we could probably fill the whole of YBO with them) we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

To use these listings effectively we recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

Keeping up to date

WHILE WE TRY and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details, drop an email to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Starters	0845 6012 586	£17.88	Yes	15	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Home	0845 6012 586	£59.88	100Mb	50	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Business	0845 6012 586	£107.88	300Mb	200	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Professionals	0845 6012 586	£203.88	800Mb	500	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Starters	0845 6012 586	£17.88	Yes	15	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Home	0845 6012 586	£59.88	100Mb	50	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Business	0845 6012 586	£107.88	300Mb	200	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Professionals	0845 6012 586	£203.88	800Mb	500	Yes	Yes
123-reg	www.123-reg.co.uk	Regular	0900 22 11 123	£45.87	250Mb	10	Yes	Yes
123-reg	www.123-reg.co.uk	Xtra	0900 22 11123	£69.87	500Mb	25	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Standard	0870 739 2020	£100.00	100Mb	15	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	PHP	0870 739 2020	£150.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Cold Fusion	0870 739 2020	£250.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Java	0870 739 2020	£300.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Bronze	0845 1668386	£20	10Mb	2	Yes	No
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Silver	0845 1668386	£64.99	25Mb	10	Yes	Yes
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Bronze	0845 1668386	£79.99	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Active ISP	www.activeisp.co.uk	Small Business	0870 7304000	£143.40	35Mb	10	Yes	Yes
AMEN hosting	www.amen.uk.com	promo WebPRO	None	£6	100Mb	10	Yes	No
AMEN hosting	www.amen.uk.com	regular WebPRO	None	£54	100Mb	10	Yes	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	10Mb	08707 449227	£70.00	10Mb	1	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	20Mb	08707 449227	£122.00	20Mb	5	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	50Mb	08707 449227	£190.00	50Mb	5	No	No
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Pro	08707 555565	£99.95	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Premier	08707 555565	£199.95	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise	08707 555565	£349.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise NT	08707 555565	£399.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Light	0845 355 1000	£29.99	10Mb	10	No	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Starter	0845 355 1000	£59.99	50Mb	20	Yes	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Soho	0845 355 1000	£99.00	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Enterprise	0845 355 1000	£199.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Professional	0845 355 1000	£399.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Enterprise Plan	0870 7414151	£89.99	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£179.99	250Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Basic Plan	None	£167.40	10 MB	5	Yes	No
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Standard Plan	None	£239.40	75 MB	40	Yes	No
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Advanced Plan	None	£287.40	125 MB	60	Yes	No
EliteServe UK	www.eliteukserve.net	Business Kick Start	0870 741 5898	£49	50Mb	20	No	Yes
EliteServe UK	www.eliteukserve.net	Business Professional	0870 741 5898	£99.00	100Mb	100	No	Yes
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Home User	01452 541260	£60.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Business User	01452 541260	£199.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Ghoulnet	www.ghoulnet.co.uk	Business Web	0800 0747581	£69.00	100Mb	50	Yes	No
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Bronze Hosting	0870 922 4000	£70.50	50Mb	5	£50/year	Yes
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Silver Hosting	0870 922 4000	£264.38	100Mb	10	£50/year	Yes
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Gold Hosting	0870 922 4000	£346.63	250Mb	50	£50/year	Yes
Griffin Internet	www.griffin.net.uk	Windows 2000 Webspace	0870 0007100	£199	150Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Silver	0808 1801880	£89.95	100Mb	5	Yes	No
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Gold	0808 1801880	£134.55	200Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Gold Plus	0808 1801880	£179.55	200MB	30	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Platinum	0808 1801880	£449.55	500MB	50	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Platinum Plus	0808 1801880	£809.95	500Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 50	0870 0500303	£239.88	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 75	0870 0500303	£359.88	75Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 100	0870 0500303	£1199.88	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes

- Domain Names
- Virtual Web Hosting
- Dedicated Solutions
- Custom Enterprise Servers
- Advanced Control Panel
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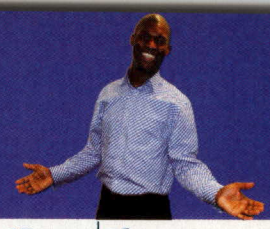
- Award winning Support



NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Personal	None	£29.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Advanced	None	£89.99	100Mb	4	Yes	No
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Executive	None	£159.99	200Mb	10	Yes	No
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Entry	0115 9170000	£99.95	250MB	1	No	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Pro	0115 9170000	£199.95	750Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business	0115 9170000	£199	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business eCommerce	0115 9170000	£499	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Toe in the water	020 8426 4446	£49.00	None	None	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Going for a paddle	020 8426 4446	£139.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Dive, dive, dive	020 8426 4446	£287.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Small Business	0870 9059444	£42.00	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Business Pro	0870 9059444	£60.00	200Mb	25	Yes	Yes
NetBenefit	www.netbenefit.com	Shared Hosting Package	0800 0724696	£180.00	100Mb	None	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	HOME	0800 2987214	£60	100Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	COMMERCE	0800 2987214	£180	200Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	RESELLER	0800 2987214	£450	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	ENTERPRISE	0800 2987214	£1200	1000Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	.NETppliance 800	0800 2987214	£1200	256Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	.NETppliance 1400	0800 2987214	£3600	512Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Starter	0800 0283639	£131.40	20Mb	1	Yes	No
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Starter	0800 0283639	£131.40	20Mb	1	Yes	No
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NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Power	0800 0283639	£419.40	300Mb	40	Yes	No
Netway	www.netway.co.uk	Small to medium business	07020 939842	£199.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Oscura Ltd	www.oscura.co.uk	Business Development Hosting	0118 959 7200	£150	25Mb	6	Yes	Yes
Oscura Ltd	www.oscura.co.uk	Business Premium Hosting	0118 959 7200	£350	100MB	6	Yes	Yes
PMHIS.Net	www.pmhis.net	Web+	None	£60.00	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Positive Internet Co	www.positive-internet.com	Shared Hosting	0800 316006	£250.00	120Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Valuespace	0870 7303170	£49.99	100Mb	50	No	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Optisapce	0870 7303170	£99.99	1Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Commercespace	0870 7303170	£199.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS10	0781 628 2991	£10	10Mb	10	Yes	Yes
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Seiretto	seiretto.com	Starter	N/A	£49	15Mb	1	Yes	Yes
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Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Basic	01684 893020	£49.99	10Mb	0	No	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Soho	01684 893020	£69.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Enterprise	01684 893020	£99.99	100Mb	10	Yes	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Corporate	01684 893020	£149.99	200Mb	20	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Entry	01707 885800	£99.99	40Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Personal	01707 885800	£99.99	80Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Small Business	01707 885800	£249.99	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Net Business	01707 885800	£399.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive	01707 885800	£499.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive E-Commerce	01707 885800	£799.99	600Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Lite 24/7	N/A	£180	25Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Dial4Business	N/A	£120	50Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Daytime	N/A	£180	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo 24/7	N/A	£300	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Symphony	N/A	£660	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Strongnet	www.strongnet.co.uk	Various	01703 866006	Various	50Mb	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host	0870 1257678	£13.99	35Mb	1	No	Yes
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host Pro	0870 1257678	£23.99	35Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Tigress UK	www.tigress-uk.com	Web50	0870 321 9528	£69.99	50Mb	3	No	Yes
Tollon	www.tollon.net	Home User Plan	0800 542 6549	£69.99	25Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Tollon	www.tollon.net	Business Plan 1	0800 542 6549	£99.99	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	5 megs	0845 082 0696	£55.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
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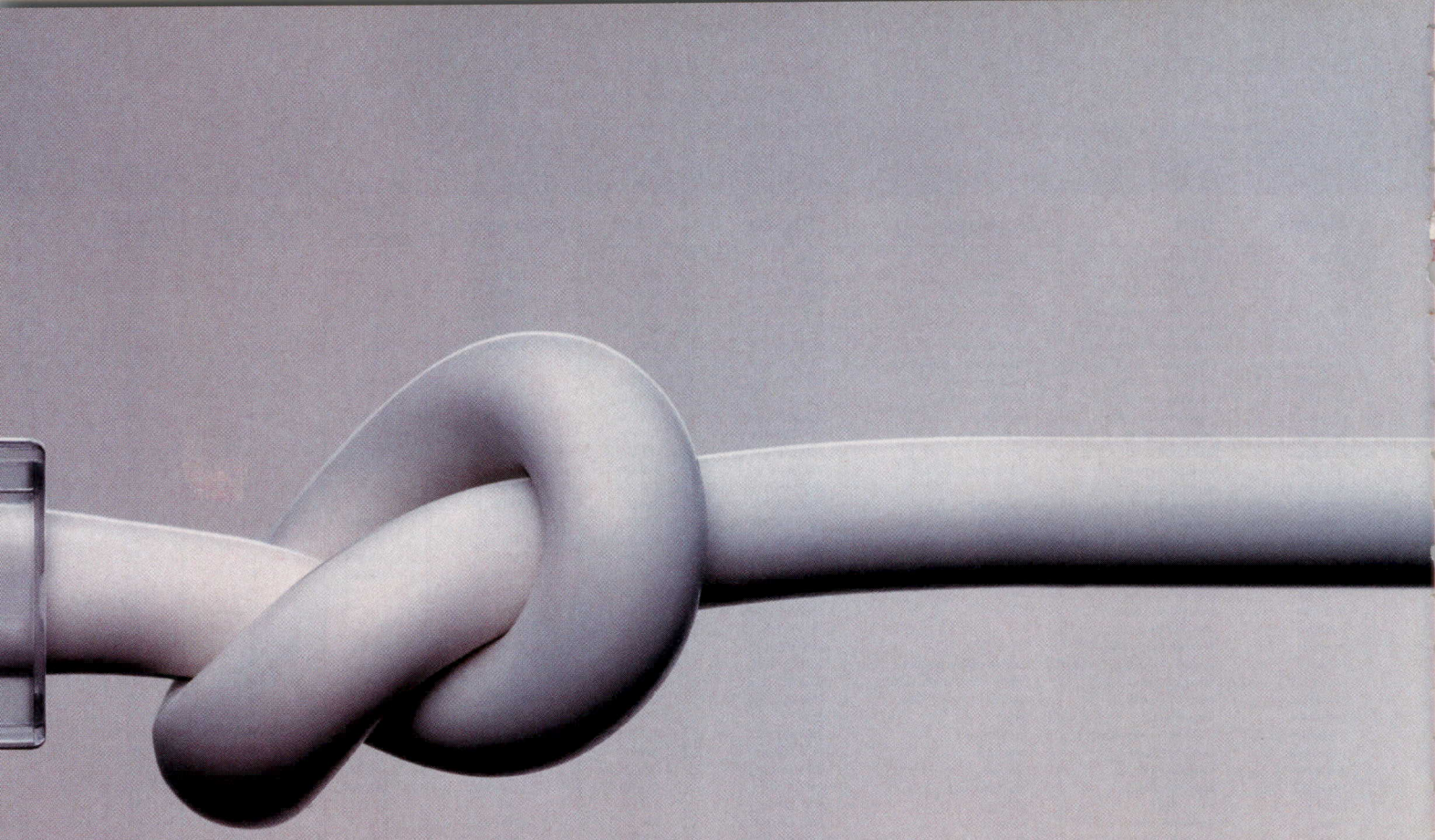
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	20 megs	0845 082 0696	£125.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
ValueWebHosts	www.valuewebhosts.com	Plan 1	n/a	£8.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Starter	020 7767 3700	£109.45	10Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Designer	020 7767 3700	£197.45	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Business	020 7767 3700	£274.45	125Mb	40	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Commerce	020 7767 3700	£384.45	175Mb	60	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Host	0800 11 77 44	£120	25Mb	12	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Business	0800 11 77 44	£215	50Mb	30	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Professional	0800 11 77 44	£480	250Mb	120	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Professional Plus	0800 11 77 44	£1980	250Mb	120	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Entry	0115 917 0000	£99.95	250Mb	1	No	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Pro	0115 917 0000	£199.95	750Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business Pro	0115 917 0000	£199.00	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business E-Commerce	0115 917 0000	£499.00	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Basic Hosting	0800 0151718	£35.00	10Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Economy Hosting	0800 0151718	£50.00	25Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Senior Hostings	0800 0151718	£125.00	50Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Executive Hostings	0800 0151718	£200.00	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Entry	0845 126 0325	£40.00	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Professional	0845 126 0325	£59.99	50	25	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Entry	0845 126 0325	£40.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Personal Hosting	01784 460896	£39.00	25Mb	20	Yes	No
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Business Hosting	01784 460896	£94.00	200Mb	100	Yes	No
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Premium Hosting	01784 460896	£350.00	500Mb	350	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 1	0845 4584200	£50.00	5Mb	0	No	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 2	0845 4584200	£100.00	25Mb	0	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 3	0845 4584200	£175.00	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 4	0845 4584200	£500.00	100Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 128	0870 6000971	£1,140	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 256	0870 6000971	£1,740	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 512	0870 6000971	£2,340	40Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ4r 256	0870 6000971	£2,3400	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4r 512	0870 6000971	£2,940	40Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ XTR 128	0870 6000971	£3,540	30Gb Unlimited	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ XTR 1Gb	0870 6000971	£4,740	80Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
ZyWeb Business	www.zyweb.com	ZyWeb Business	01392 209500	£210.00	30Mb	10	No	No



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Reviews

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ALL THE LATEST INTERNET SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

Welcome...

ONCE AGAIN IT'S time to delve into our product bucket for more reviews. For the record, and to reassure the various distributors, we in fact keep all review samples on a highly 'organised' and 'sturdy' shelf, so the bucket thing was purely metaphorical. Anyway, it simply wouldn't befit the kind of jaw-dropping bits and pieces we have lined up this time, many worth shouting about.

Studio MX 2004 is the biggest thing to hit the office, so it receives the unrelenting gaze of this month's spotlight. Macromedia brings favourites Dreamweaver, Flash, Fireworks, Freehand and ColdFusion together in one bundle. Next, we dissect the new T610 mobile phone from Sony Ericsson, before running the rule over Contribute 2. There's enough time to strike a pose for the JVC GR-DX95 camera, and a host of others cap things off – phew!

Mark Billen, Staff Writer

On test this issue...

114 **Studio MX 2004**
This month's spotlight shines upon the huge Studio MX in all its glory

118 **Sony Ericsson T610**
The sleek creation that's pushing mobile phone designs forward

119 **Contribute 2**
Maintain your Web site easily with this content management system

120 **Actinic Audio Store**
Rock the Internet with your choice of tunes direct from your Web site

121 **JVC GR-DX95**
Become a budding Spielberg with your own sleek DV camera

122 **Family Tree Genealogy Suite**
Delve into your family's past with the latest research tools

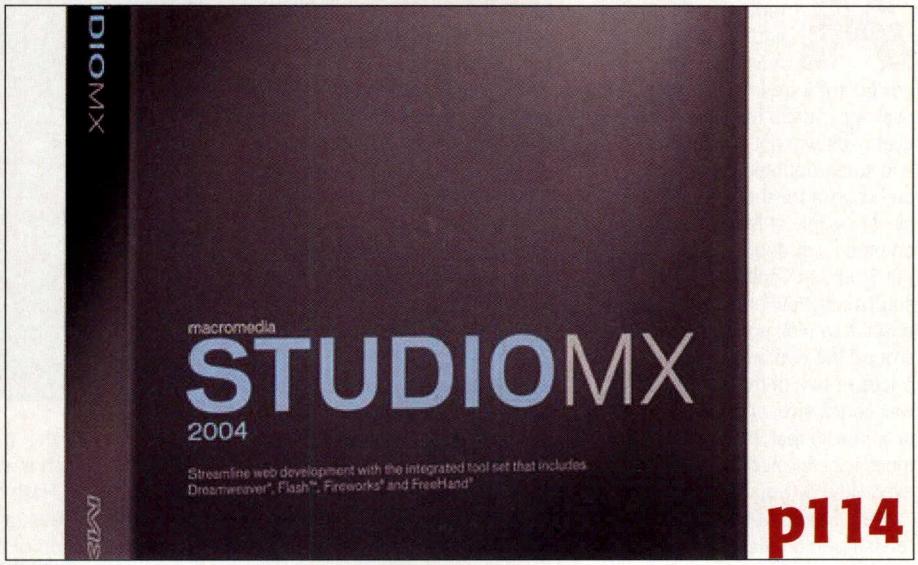
123 **Microsoft IntelliMouse**
Is Bill Gates' new cordless mouse up to Microsoft's high standards?

How our ratings work

Practical Internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★ — A truly excellent product you should buy now. Given to scores of 90% or above

Practical Internet RECOMMENDED — It's great, but not totally essential to your well-being. 85% or above

p118


macromedia
STUDIOMX
2004
Streamline web development with the integrated tool set that includes Dreamweaver®, Flash™, Fireworks® and FreeHand®

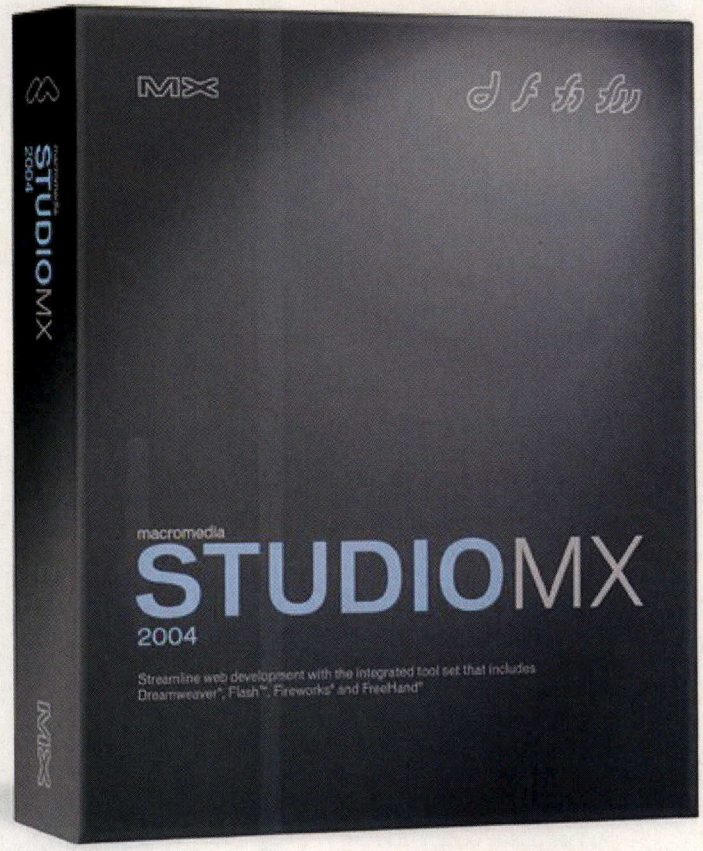
p114

p121

Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

Studio MX 2004 beta

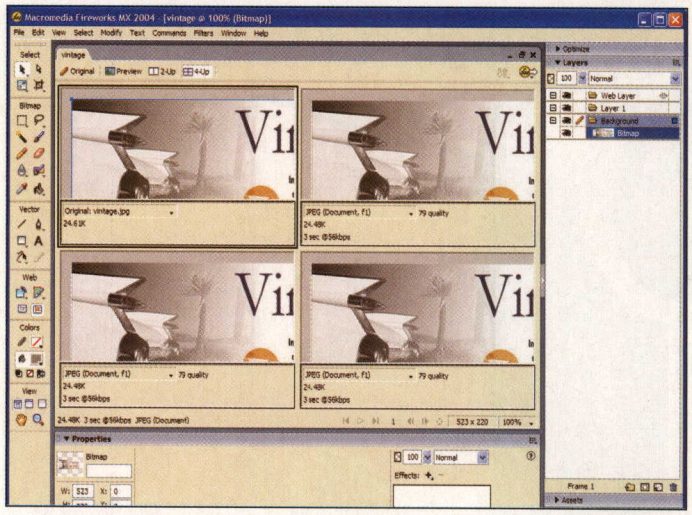
IT HAS A RANGE OF IMPRESSIVE NEW FEATURES AND A COOL NEW LOOK, BUT WE ASK IF MACROMEDIA HAS MANAGED TO IMPROVE ON THE HIGH STANDARD OF ITS PREVIOUS VERSION



About 18 months ago, Macromedia took a monumental gamble and threw all of its most popular Web-design software into one immense package. Studio MX raised a few eyebrows when it was launched, and some doubted the public's enthusiasm for the venture. The clever people at Macromedia pre-empted such doubts, and launched the Studio MX suite at a surprisingly low price, enabling punters to pick up the package for around the combined individual prices of two of the set. The result was conclusive, and Macromedia now boasts that Studio MX is its most popular piece of software ever. How do you follow that?

Well, Studio MX 2004 is no rehash of old ideas, but then again it's not the comprehensive rewrite that its predecessor was. Rather, MX 2004 expands on the themes first introduced in the original MX, and presents you with a far more streamlined and easy-to-use set of programs. Efficiency is the name of the game here, each application containing a barrage of impressive new tools designed to save you from performing the same laborious mundane tasks that might have blighted your MX life in the past.

First things first, though – it's worth taking note of just what you get in Studio MX 2004. Essentially, it's all the usual suspects, comprising Dreamweaver and Fireworks (both now branded with MX 2004 status), Freehand MX and ColdFusion MX 6.1. To confuse matters, there are now two different versions of Flash – the standard MX 2004, which is an update to Flash MX, and Flash MX Professional 2004, an all-new advanced edition of the vector animation tool. Standard copies of Studio MX 2004 ship with the normal edition of Flash, but you can shell out extra for a Flash Pro-enabled suite. A review of Flash Professional will appear next month, but this time we're concentrating on the three big players in the beta version of the standard suite.



All of the old favourites are there in Fireworks, plus a fair few extra features as well

Dream on

Dreamweaver has long been accepted as the industry standard WYSIWYG application on the market, and MX 2004 has some nifty enhancements that should reaffirm the giant's place in the market for at least a while longer. Central to the developments are Cascading Style Sheets, of which you have greater control than ever before. In essence, you can now control CSS as if they were any other part of your Web page, allowing you to configure everything to the nearest pixel. With a rule inspector and property inspector of their own, there's nothing stopping you taking CSS by the scruff of the neck.

If you're doubting the power of Dreamweaver's CSS capabilities, how does this feature grab you? You can now import Word or Excel documents into your site, and Dreamweaver will preserve all the fonts, colours and CSS styles so you get your spreadsheet exactly the way you created it. Sure, you get the odd formatting glitch or two, but Dreamweaver more often than not comes up trumps with the goods.

Table for two

We've all used a table or two in our Web pages, yet few programs have

managed to express their power in an accessible and user-friendly way. Allow Dreamweaver MX 2004 to step in, with a much more intuitive table creation process. Instead of having to keep clicking near the edge of a table in a futile attempt to select it, MX 2004 now sports a much easier system – each menu has a display and a drop-down menu for your adjusting pleasure.

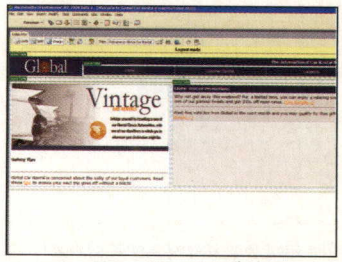
This is just one of many improvements to the interface, and you'll find the Insert toolbar is now much less cumbersome to use. One of the sections in here is a spiffing 'Favorites' bar, where you can assign all the tasks you envisage using most often. Use this intelligently, and you could render the rest of the Insert toolbar obsolete.

Another nice touch is the image-editing toolbar in the Property inspector. Previous versions might have offered roundtrip editing in Fireworks, but this new Dreamweaver allows you to make basic edits without leaving the interface. Unbeknown to you, clicking on the crop, brightness and contrast or other editing tools actually opens up Fireworks, uses the function in question, then shuts it down – all without telling you.

"YOU GET TO CHOOSE FROM A VARIETY OF PRE-MADE TEMPLATES WITHIN FLASH"

Flash it up

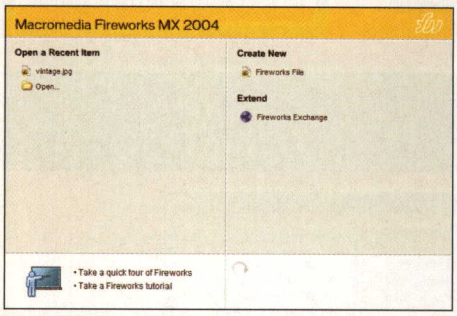
Flash is the only one of the big three that doesn't sport a new Start page, but that's not to say it's unfriendly for beginners. In fact, choose the option to create a new animation, and one of Flash's new features kicks in instantly. Instead of simply giving you a blank canvas to work with, you get to choose from a variety of pre-made templates, giving you what you need to create such delights as quizzes and photo albums. What's more, open 'em up, and they all contain instructions on how to configure the templates to your own needs. Creating a photo album in Flash used to involve a hell of a lot of work, but it's now within anyone's grasp.



The Dreamweaver interface has been subtly tweaked to make your Web-building experience much more user friendly

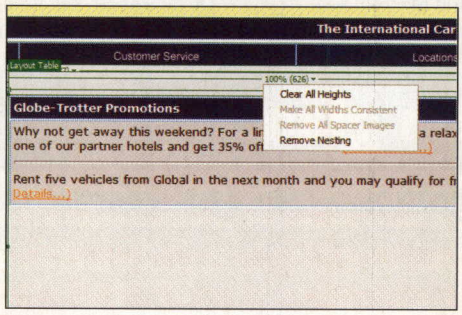
This concept is expanded in the Components section, which now contains more pre-built scrollbars, windows and buttons for you to drag onto your animation and configure until you're satisfied. More significantly, though, Flash MX 2004 ships with a cool new feature going by the name of →

Six of the best new features in Studio MX 2004



1 Introduction screen

Dreamweaver and Fireworks now have opening screens containing the files you've used most recently and a host of other options to get you on your way more quickly. You can configure these screens to contain the options you want or you can turn them off.


The International Car
Customer Service
Locations
Layout Table
100% (626)
Clear All Heights
Make All Widths Consistent
Remove All Spacer Images
Remove Nesting
Globe-Trotter Promotions
Why not get away this weekend? For a lir
one of our partner hotels and get 35% off
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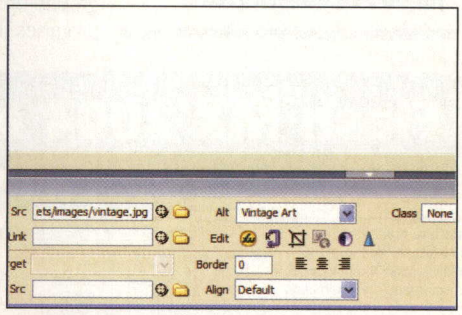
Details...)

2 Better table control

Dreamweaver sports a range of table controls and options designed to take the headache out of building your site. These include easier manipulation tools and the ability to adjust whole sections of a table with one click.

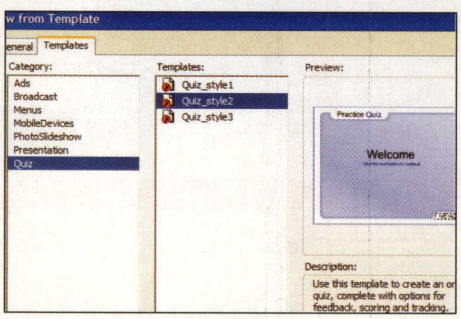


3 Roundtrip-free editing

The new version of Dreamweaver contains a selection of image manipulation tools to let you tinker with your pictures without having to open another program. Forget roundtrip editing, as you can now do it all without leaving the interface you're working in.

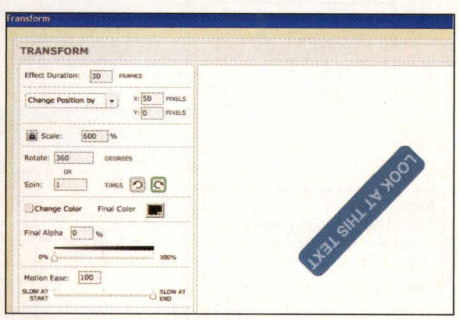
4 Motion Blur

Fireworks contains a wealth of new image effects tools, one of which is the Motion Blur tool. As you can imagine from the name, this lets you add sophisticated blur effects to your images in seconds, as the process is largely automated.



5 Flash templates

Create new complex animations and movies in minutes thanks to the built-in templates that now ship with the program. Many of the templates deal with movie types that would otherwise take you hours to create.



6 Timeline effects

We've all huffed and puffed at having to spend ages creating simple animation effects in Flash. This has been resolved with the great new Timeline Effects tool, which works like a Photoshop filter by applying a series of different functions one after the other.

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Clear All Heights
Make All Widths Consistent
Remove All Spacer Images
Remove Nesting

This latest Dreamweaver revamp gives you more power than ever before over the way you work with tables

'Timeline effects'. The name conjures up all sorts of magical images, but this is another labour-saving device from Macromedia. Each timeline effect is like a filter in Photoshop, in that it takes a variety of tasks and combines them into one configurable setting. Many of the effects in Flash deal with animation, however, letting you achieve fairly impressive results in a couple of clicks. Offering such functions as transforms and transitions, many of the effects here are reminiscent of third-party Flash tools like SWiSH, which should give you an indication of how incredibly easy they are to use. Add this to the mass of high end features you'll find throughout the rest of Flash, and you're looking at the solution for pretty much all levels of Flash users.

"MACROMEDIA PROMISES THAT FIREWORKS IS AS MUCH AS 85 PERCENT FASTER"

What a firecracker

Among all the changes to Dreamweaver and Flash, it would be all too easy to forget any developments that have been made to Fireworks. Such an oversight would be sheer folly, though, for Fireworks has a wealth of improvements designed to aid the way you create and edit graphics. Like its compadres, the Fireworks engine has been rewritten from the ground up, and Macromedia promises that the program is now as much as 85 percent faster than its predecessor. We didn't sit with a nanosecond-equipped stopwatch and time the exact duration of each operation, but Fireworks MX 2004 does seem much nippier to us.

Many of the changes to Fireworks concern the application's feature set, aiming, like Flash, to automate many of the annoying tasks you had to conduct manually in the past. A Motion Blur tool might not seem the most amazing thing in the world, but the bods at Macromedia assure us that this was the single most requested feature from their user-feedback sessions, so you'll find a nifty configurable Motion Blur tool within the program.

There are also tools to let you touch up digital photos, and a pleasant Auto-shapes function that enables you to draw a selection of odd and inventive shapes really easily. The Check In/Out feature has been borrowed wholesale from Dreamweaver, but it's a powerful feature that allows advanced punters to set up a shared file over a network without worrying about people accidentally messing it all up.

Improving on what was classed as a near-perfect package couldn't have been easy, but Macromedia has done a fine job. The time-saving tools in particular should make the package a winner, and there's more than enough here to keep Studio MX at the top of the tree. ■

The verdict

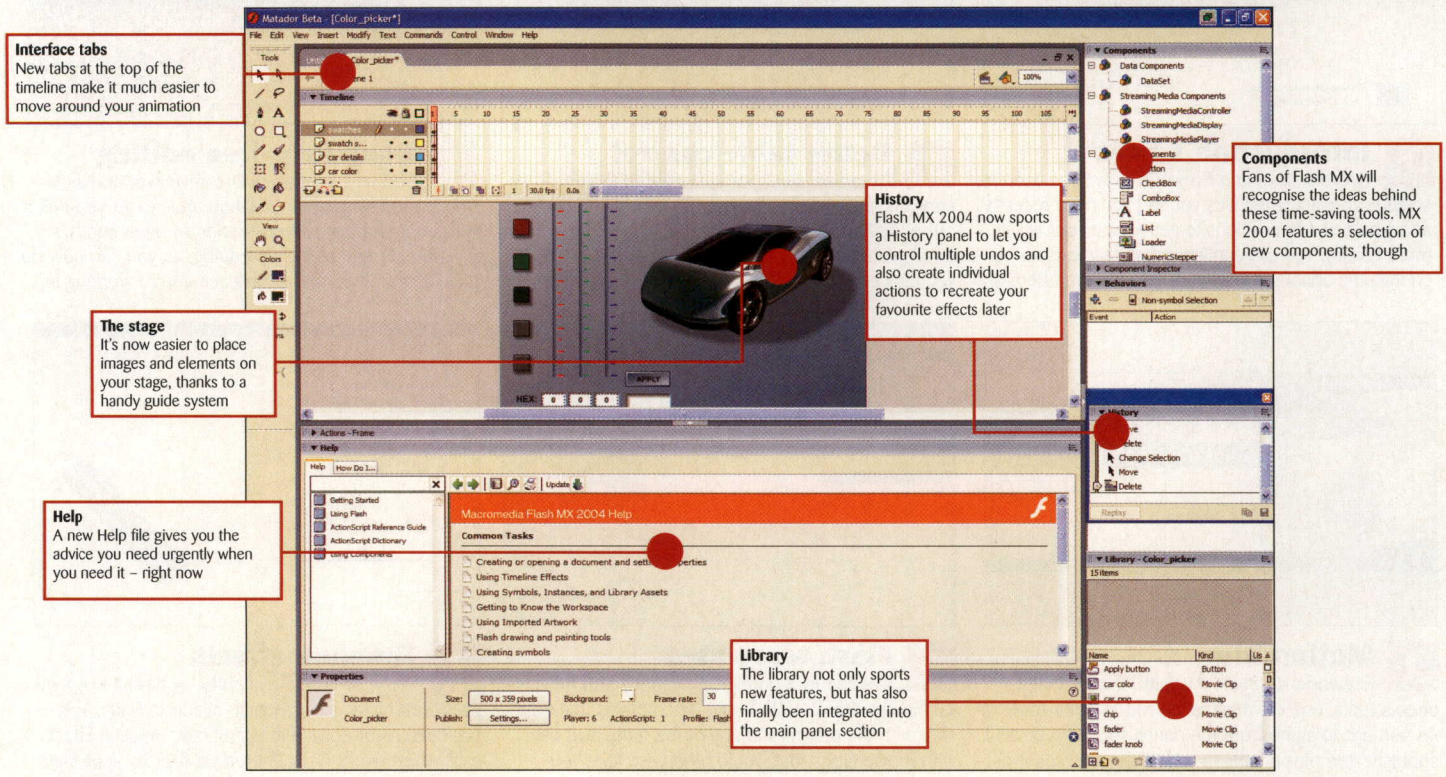
SOFTWARE: Studio MX 2004
PRICE: £699
TEL: N/A
URL: www.macromedia.com

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★★★
OVERALL **94%**

✔ Contains everything you could possibly need to create state-of-the-art Web sites, and it's a bargain at the price as well

✖ It doesn't represent as much of a sea change as the original Studio MX

Flash MX 2004 at a glance


Interface tabs
New tabs at the top of the timeline make it much easier to move around your animation
The stage
It's now easier to place images and elements on your stage, thanks to a handy guide system
Help
A new Help file gives you the advice you need urgently when you need it – right now
History
Flash MX 2004 now sports a History panel to let you control multiple undos and also create individual actions to recreate your favourite effects later
Components
Fans of Flash MX will recognise the ideas behind these time-saving tools. MX 2004 features a selection of new components, though
Library
The library not only sports new features, but has also finally been integrated into the main panel section
Macromedia Flash MX 2004 Help
Common Tasks

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Month to Month Contract
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PRICING

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MSDE
PERL
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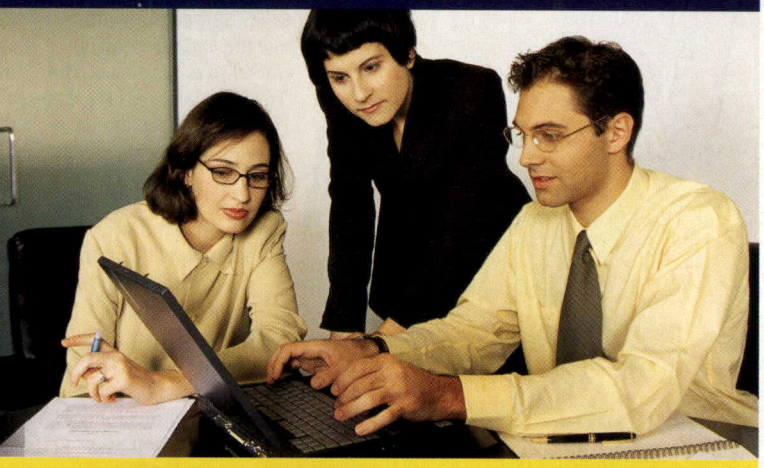
File-upload ASP Component
EMail ASP Component
Charting ASP Component



WINDOWS-SERVERS.NET

FREEPHONE 0800 2987 214 **SALES@WINDOWS-SERVERS.NET**

Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

Sony Ericsson T610

THE SWEDISH-JAPANESE DREAM PROMISES A HANDSET CRAMMED FULL OF NEXT-GENERATION FEATURES WITH THIS NATURAL SUCCESSOR TO THE T68I

Whatever next for mobile phones, eh? Surely a time will come when handsets no bigger than a biscuit do everything but cook dinner for you. With progress as rapid as it is, in perhaps ten years we may look back on mobiles like the very one on show here with humorous disdain. Make no mistake though, the Sony Ericsson T610 looks to be one of the most advanced examples available today. While cutting-edge video phones dwarf the average shoe, the T610 attempts to round up the more practical and dynamic features in a dinky unit. Measuring in at 102x44mm and weighing 95g, the phone isn't too dimensionally dissimilar to its predecessor, the T68i. They are of course, different in shape, with the new model opting for a far sleeker tablet-like design that's comfy to grasp.

Perhaps one of its most striking characteristics is the disproportionately large screen that boasts an impressive 128x160 pixel display. Importantly, the resultant compromise in keypad space isn't noticeable, with the pronounced input buttons evenly positioned. These are crowned by a set of larger menu and 'soft' keys for navigating the interface, along with the main joystick.

It's not until you power the handset up via its flush 'on' switch that you appreciate the 65,536 colours and how the various controls work. On a basic level, the T610 has an interface that is not only easy to navigate but gorgeous to look at. The joystick lets you effortlessly flick through windows of options that can be easily customised with various skins or themes. The funky icons and wallpapers give the phone a PDA appearance, and when you couple this graphical power with the camera the potential is limitless.

Picture messaging is perhaps seen as the rising star in mobile phone circles, although manufacturers have been slow to successfully internalise the technology within their devices. So this is where the T610 could be sold, with its small lens built into the back of the phone providing pictures that although not staggering in quality, easily suffice.

The larger screen certainly helps to showcase your snaps, along with picture formats including JPEGs, GIFs and bitmaps. A handy button on the phone's side allows you to take shots quickly, and the results can be stored, edited with the included paint program or forwarded to friends.

You can even assign these pictures as your wallpaper or associate them with certain phonebook contacts so they flash up when calling.

Good communication

On the communications side the T610 is equally impressive, with reception normally good and audio quality likewise. Any hissing noise on early units seems to have been eradicated, while volume levels could be improved – not least in the ring tone department. The polyphonic support is great, with the inclusion of a tone composer proving fun, although the meek output on even the loudest setting could cause missed calls.

Connectivity to GPRS services and WAP is also easier than before, offering not only the chance to access information services but also the sending and collection of email. What's more, the phone also delivers unprecedented Bluetooth support that really does perform. Various headsets and hands-free kits can be wirelessly added, not to mention PC-based hardware such as USB data receivers.

You can even swap pictures between matching handsets with the included infrared port, while uploading to PC can help with storage – which is where the handset falls down slightly.

Memory matters

The frankly stingy 2Mb of memory is further restricted by the amount of preloaded applications that arrive with it, of which only a selection can be deleted. It's disappointing, because having the ability to download more Java and 'Mophun' games like the preloaded 'Deep Abyss' and excellent 'Mini Golf' is no good without adequate storage.

Other niggles include the difficulty of viewing the screen in bright daylight. Most colour phones do suffer here and the T610 is no exception, although selecting a brighter theme does prevent things from looking too dark. Additionally, the phone's set of external side-mounted buttons cannot be assigned to different functions. Provision of a special WAP button that could be accidentally triggered seems pointless, when tapping on the joystick or shuffling through the menus is just as easy. Bear in mind also that the casing on the handset, although smooth and stylish, can become grimy very quickly, so keep the supplied cleaning cloth close by.

These are however, mere niggles – and when you think of the excellent call time and cost utilities, Tri band support, voice dialling, calendar and extensive battery life, you cannot fail to be impressed by this phone. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Sony Ericsson T610
PRICE: £299
TEL: 020 7419 8613
URL: www.sonyericsson.com

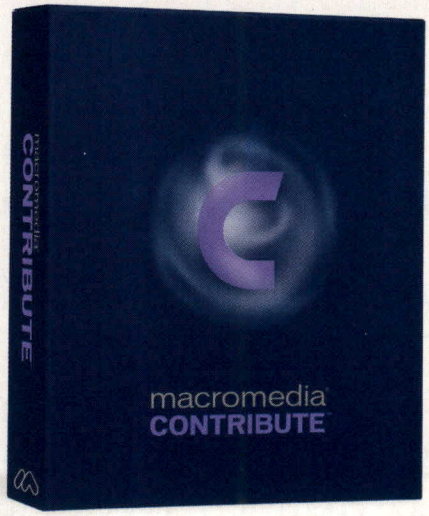
FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★½
VALUE: ★★★★½
OVERALL **90%**

✔ Too many features for the review to do justice, with integrated camera and Bluetooth support topping an impressive package

✖ Weedy memory and dull screen performance in natural light are possible setbacks

Practical internet RECOMMENDED

Macromedia Contribute 2



DO AWAY WITH THE STRESS OF MAINTAINING YOUR WEB SITE WITH MACROMEDIA'S LATEST ADDITION TO ITS FAMILY OF AUTHORING TOOLS

Running your own successful site isn't really something you can do on a whim. Sure, the average home page only requires as much effort as you deem worthy, but creating something more ambitious requires real graft. Leading examples of sites such as eBay, Friends Reunited and the BBC weren't built in a day, with the core structure needing constant updating.

This will usually involve large teams of trained people using sophisticated tools, but Macromedia's Contribute 2 aims to make the process much easier. Intended to complement the design capabilities of sister app Dreamweaver MX, Contribute's latest promises to make rapid site editing and republishing dead simple.

So when you come to use the actual software for the first time, you may find yourself surprised at just how straightforward it is. The basic interface consists of only two main areas, with the first a slim panel situated on the left for listing pages available for edit. It's the main larger Edit window that functions both as a browser for previewing pages and as a draft window where changes can take place. Of course, the dedicated tools for making your HTML amendments are understandably limited for the purposes of the software.

This is not a full-blown authoring suite, but with the ability to quickly perform common functions like format text or fonts, add images, tables, links and even Flash movies, it does the job. As a consequence, the inclusion of an HTML editor is non-existent, which could be a problem in most professional apps.

Hooked up

The first thing you need to do is connect to your chosen site, and Contribute achieves this in one of two ways. You have the option to import a 'Connection key' created by your Web site administrator that contains all settings, or by establishing the link manually with the integrated wizard. Here you are stepped through what the program needs to access your site, including URL and perhaps server passwords etc. You can then have multiple connections to various domains and keep them stored in a list to make life even easier. It's then a case of navigating through pages with the built-in browser and switching to markup mode when you wish to edit or start a new page.

This is the best place to mention a funky fade in/fade out effect that Macromedia uses to toggle the selection of buttons between both functions – although its slight delay could quickly irritate. Apart from that, it's only really a matter of publishing the updates you are satisfied with by clicking Publish. The simplicity of it all is almost laughable – but you certainly shouldn't feel short changed, just refreshed by an application that literally does exactly what it says on the tin. Or in this case, box. ■

The verdict

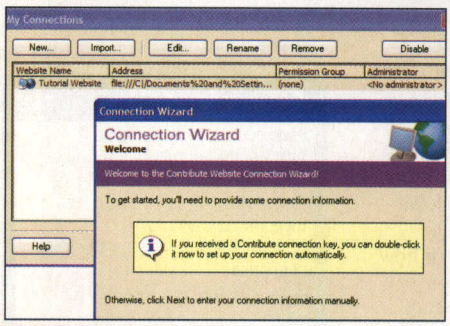
PRODUCT: Macromedia Contribute 2
PRICE: £69
TEL: 01344 458600
URL: www.macromedia.com

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★★★
OVERALL 86%

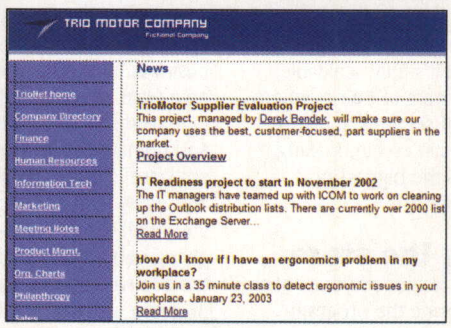
✔ Does everything promised in the most no-nonsense way possible and should save valuable time

✖ Could perhaps add more editing tools, and the reduced flexibility from not being able to edit page code is a shame

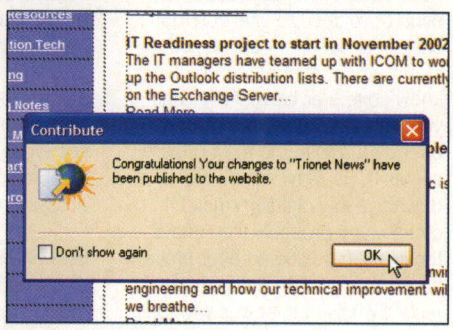
Contribute's classic cuts



1 Like magic
Pointing Contribute towards your Web site couldn't be easier with the special Connection wizard. Click 'New' and the dialog will prompt you for the required information before adding the new connection to the list.


TRIO MOTOR COMPANY
News
Triollet home
Company Directory
Finance
Human Resources
Information Tech
Marketing
Meeting Notes
Product Mgmt.
Org. Charts
Philanthropy
TrioMotor Supplier Evaluation Project
This project, managed by Derek Bendek, will make sure our company uses the best, customer-focused, part suppliers in the market.
Project Overview
IT Readiness project to start in November 2002
The IT managers have teamed up with ICOM to work on cleaning up the Outlook distribution lists. There are currently over 2000 list on the Exchange Server...
Read More
How do I know if I have an ergonomics problem in my workplace?
Join us in a 35 minute class to detect ergonomic issues in your workplace. January 23, 2003
Read More

2 Change afoot
By clicking the Edit Page button while viewing your site in the browser window you can start to update content. Buttons for changing font styles and quickly adding elements like tables or links are also available, with Flash movies embedded via the menu.

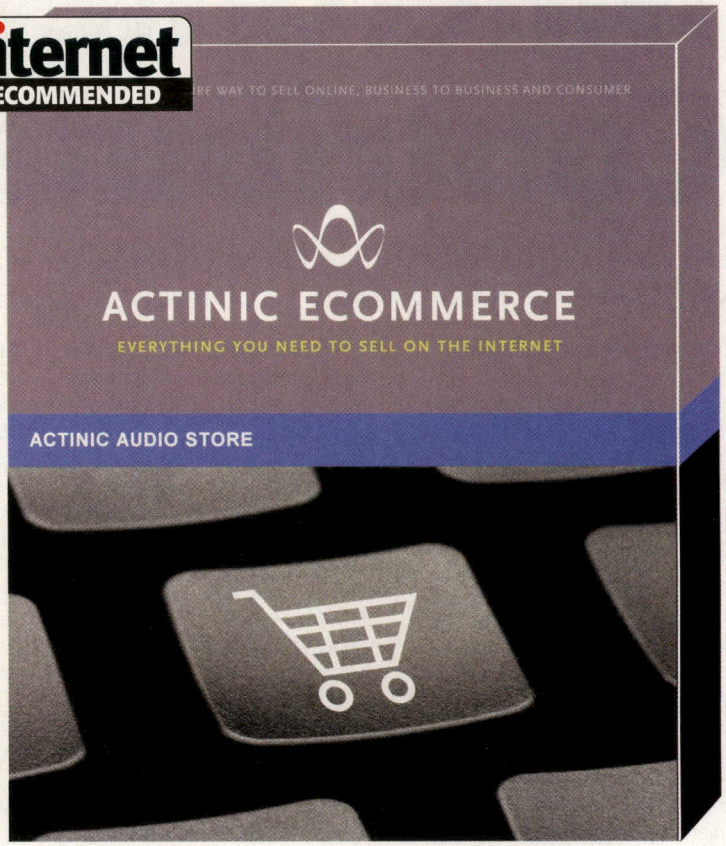

IT Readiness project to start in November 2002
The IT managers have teamed up with ICOM to wo
up the Outlook distribution lists. There are currentl
on the Exchange Server...
Contribute
Congratulations! Your changes to "Trionet News" have been published to the website.
Don't show again
OK
engineering and how our technical improvement wi
we breathe...

3 Publish this
The new and improved page can then be uploaded to the server by doing no more than hitting Publish. You'll see a transfer progress bar briefly before seeing confirmation that everything was successful. It frankly couldn't be any easier!

Actinic Audio Store

AS MUSIC FANS WAKE UP TO THE IDEA OF PAYING FOR TUNES ONLINE, WHY NOT SELL SONGS ON YOUR SITE USING ACTINIC'S LATEST OFFERING?

Practical internet RECOMMENDED



While the older generation may poo-poo modern music-making methods, it's fair to say that digital technology is opening doors for musicians who wouldn't have stood a chance in the days of Glenn Miller and Doris Day.

Whether or not you think it's a good thing that artists such as Daniel Bedingfield are breaking out of the bedroom and into our homes, thanks to their computer artistry, it's fair to say that digital music is something of a booming market at present. With big players like Apple and MSN showing signs of making a killing from their music download services, and sites like CDWOW and Amazon doing very nicely out of CD sales, the Web is clearly becoming a place where punters are prepared to pay for their tunes.

Wired for sound

If you fancy plugging into this emerging online industry, don't feel you have to spend a fortune building up a music-ordering site. Actinic's new Audio Store application has been developed to give you the chance to set up an online audio store without a lot of technical knowledge – or cash. It provides you with a customisable platform for offering music in the form of hard copies (CDs, vinyl, tapes, etc) or in downloadable digital format. Of course, you probably won't have the clout to be able to offer entire back catalogues from the major record labels, but it gives you the chance to promote your own music or that of local bands who are trying to hit the big time.

Although the Explorer-style interface looks a little daunting at first, the application is surprisingly simple to get started with, especially if you've used its parent product, Actinic eCommerce, before. The wizard-style Navigator guides you through each step of the store-creation process effortlessly, while explaining what's happening at every stage.

At the core of the program is the tree-organised catalogue-management system, which boasts full drag-and-drop support, allowing you to store details of up to 10,000 products complete with images. There are all manner of product settings you can tinker with, so you can offer your wares in the way that suits you best.

Some of the useful features within the Advanced settings include the ability to specify digital files for your customers to download after buying the product on the site, plus a facility for creating pop-up windows to provide extra information about a product when a certain action is performed by the user.

The beauty of the catalogue system is that it's fully scaleable, and there appears to be no limit to the number of sections and sub-sections you can create, making it ideal for even the biggest of product offerings.

Running the store

Once you've fashioned your online music store using the program, there are plenty of tools to help you keep it up and running and give your business the best possible chance of making it big. The stock-management utilities let you automatically keep track of products, warning you when stocks are low and suspending ordering for out-of-stock products.

On top of this, you get the ability to set up detailed terms and conditions for your store, support multiple currencies and handle credit card payments securely. There's even a feature for setting up tax rates based on geographical area – it's really up to you how tightly you want to run your business, but all the tools are there on a plate with Audio Store.

In terms of perfecting your site and uploading it to the Web, the software is pretty reliable. There's a preview feature which allows you to view the site locally, giving you an impression of how the site will look. The only problem we found with this is many of the important pages of the site, such as the Order page, rely on CGI scripting and cannot be viewed. Nevertheless, uploading the site to the Web is a painless enough task, thanks to the wizard-driven 'Upload' feature within Audio Store.

Although creating an online music store might be something of a specialist area, Actinic has come up with yet another example of how an eCommerce package should be. Its formula of intuitive user interface and mighty range of features makes it perfect for anyone who wants to exploit the burgeoning digital music industry online. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Actinic Audio Store 6.1
PRICE: £499 (or £199 for 25-product version)
TEL: 0870 873 8731
URL: www.etcetera.co.uk

		OVERALL
FEATURES:	★★★★★	86%
EASE OF USE:	★★★★½	
VALUE:	★★★½☆	

✔ Amazing array of features for building and maintaining an online music store

✘ Caters for a very specialist area of eBusiness

Practical Internet RECOMMENDED

JVC GR-DX95

IF YOU'RE AFTER PIXEL-PERFECT PICTURES IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND, THIS LATEST CAMCORDER FROM JVC COULD BE JUST THE BUSINESS

The affordability of digital photography and video technology nowadays seems to have every Tom, Dick and Harry peering through a lens. Or should that be viewfinder – as is the case with nearly all new examples hitting the market at the moment? There was a time when touting unwieldy VHS-loaded cameras was synonymous only with embarrassing fathers or Japanese tourists, but subsequent technological advances have helped to bring it a far cooler reputation. What's more, consumers are now benefiting from the ability to use home processing for email, providing Web content and burning video or photos to CD.

If it's these kinds of applications you're after, JVC's new GR-DX95 could be an excellent example to try. The unit boasts an impressive array of built-in imaging effects, filters and fades while remaining suitably compact. In actual fact, when you do pick the camera up for the first time it can be quite bewildering trying to locate the expected controls. Clearly the designers have worked overtime to scale things down to the most necessary functionality, with buttons that double-up between modes. Flicking between playback, auto and manual focus settings via the locking thumbwheel is simple, although the supplied remote control and graphical menus give access to advanced options. The camera naturally arrives with a fitted hand strap that, when worn, wraps your hand snugly around the device.

Screen test

Although noticeably weighty, carrying it isn't too much bother when the collapsible preview screen is closed. The 1/6-inch 800,000 pixel display is hinged to open 90 degrees and can be rotated fully to view in various positions. If anything, it feels slightly flimsy, and does make the device awkward to carry when on the move. In addition, if you did want to film 'blind' with the screen closed, the Auto Pause facility unfortunately prevents this.

However, these are mere quibbles when you actually get the GR-DX95 out and start filming. We did initial tests in the artificial light of the office, but it wasn't until taping the hustle and bustle of town that the camera excelled. Funnily enough, relying on the monitor's output in natural sunlight didn't bode well, with performance slightly dull and gloomy. It was by no means poor though, and the subsequent playback under better conditions leaves you reassured for any future use.

Basic stuff like zoom and focus also do the camera justice, with an effortless swivel of the thumbwheel providing smooth close-ups with minimal blur. Problem is, considering the size and lack of significant weight to the camera, you do have to rely on a steady arm when shooting. It was therefore a struggle in windy conditions to keep heavily zoomed subjects in the frame.

Perhaps the nicest touch is the amount of available effects when filming in Manual mode. Here you can render images in sepia or monotone, while a clever Sports mode alters shutter speed to stagger the action. There's also a classic Hollywood filter that offers a brooding 'film noir' feel, and with countless fade-outs and screen wipes to boot, this camera could well appeal to budding directors.

Clarity and detail

As mentioned, watching back your efforts through the display does provide surprising levels of clarity and detail, even if the audio side of things is somewhat frail. The integrated microphone could be fantastic or very bad, depending on which adequately describes the supplied speaker. Volume is adjustable however, but it can be interesting to hear that louder noises are seemingly ignored for something like a mouse sighing. Admittedly, this is where better setup, final editing and playback on more sophisticated equipment will help.

When you do decide to hook the camera up to external devices, you should find all the necessary leads and cables provided. Apart from standard AV connectors there's also a USB wire for transferring data to and from your PC. Because the camera has a funky 'snapshot' button it means that stills can be captured and perhaps attached to a home page or sent via MMS to your friends. It can also be used as a Webcam and actual video clips are easily emailed off with the dedicated button on the side of the unit.

Certainly another top feature is the inclusion of an 8Mb memory card that can be used as an alternative to tape operation. This is clearly handy when you've run out of available space and need temporary storage to capture a special occasion. It can be removed and placed in compatible drives or have its contents deposited on a connected computer.

Lastly, another little complaint could well be the short battery life. With monitor output on continuously, the average time is just over one hour, although purchasing more or larger batteries is an option. That said, the unit does only take a similar period to fully recharge, and seeing it offers the performance it does in such a tidy package, you can't really grumble. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: JVC GR-DX95
PRICE: £700
TEL: 0870 330 5001
URL: www.jvc.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★☆
VALUE: ★★★☆☆
OVERALL 88%

✔ Superb quality pictures during record and playback, with a brilliant array of editing tools included

✖ Being stuck between palm and pocket size has its problems, while short battery life is a drag

Family Tree Genealogy Suite

TRACE YOUR CLAN HISTORY WITH THIS BUMPER ANCESTRY BUNDLE

Let's face it, we've all secretly dreamed that one day we'll discover we're two-hundredth in line to the throne and consequently own vast swathes of land across the UK and get to have servants running around after us.

Until very recently, unearthing your family history was about as straightforward as working on the *X-Files*, and would probably involve visiting the Public Records Office and trawling through endless microfiche in an effort to find someone with the same surname as yourself who may or may not be a relative.

Things are getting much easier for genealogists these days, thanks in part to the Net. The range of family tree-related tools and resources available online, coupled with email making it easier to contact distant relatives, means there's no reason why you can't trace your roots today.

It's always good to have someone, or something, to guide you in the right direction, which is exactly what the Family Tree Genealogy Suite does. The central part of the six-CD set is Family Tree Version 4, which contains a number of useful tools for tracking and managing your family history. While it's a bit tricky to master some of the tools at first, the program will help you find the people you are looking for and the places to find information.

The package also boasts an 'Internet Resource Centre', providing links to more than 100 of Britain's best family tree sites. Although many of the sites proved to be pretty useless, we managed to uncover some genuinely interesting stuff using a few of them. If, on your travels, you discover someone whom you think may be able to help with your enquiries, there's a handy people-finder called 'Ukinfo 2003 Lite' which allows you to plunder the electoral role for the name and address of voters all over the country. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Family Tree Genealogy Suite
PRICE: £49.99
TEL: N/A
URL: www.gsp.cc

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★☆☆
VALUE: ★★★★☆
OVERALL **79%**

✔ Lots of useful tools for digging up the past

✖ Discovering your family history isn't as simple as one piece of software

£27 a month Direct Debit. £28 standard. Offers end 30/09/03. Free month credited in quarterly bill. Standard connection £30, modem £50. Subject to availability, and survey. Minimum 12 month term. BT line required.

Practical internet RECOMMENDED

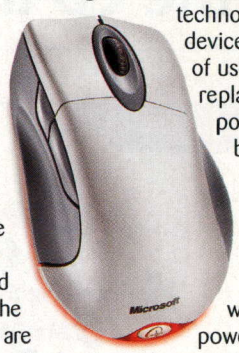
Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer

CAN MICROSOFT'S NEW COMFY AFFAIR CUT IT IN THE CROWDED MOUSE MARKET?

Cordless optical mice have been around for a while now, and although they've freed us of the hassles associated with wires and balls, they've still had their fair share of doubters.

In the early days of optical devices the technology often wasn't up to the job, resulting in clunky, unresponsive mousing, which is just not on if you're a hardcore gamer or a digital artist. Thankfully, the science behind optical mice is evolving, and Microsoft's latest offering boasts the company's new 'IntelliEye' optical technology and power-saving functionality. It seems to work too, and the cursor glides across the screen with nothing in the way of lag or stickiness, making it accurate enough for pinpoint control.

Our favourite thing about the IntelliMouse is its ergonomic design. The device is nice and chunky and fits to the contours of your hand better than anything we've held before. And besides the well-positioned left and right mouse buttons and the nimble scroll wheel, there are extra programmable buttons to give you instant access to particular functions or commands.



Another boon about the new mouse is its battery life. Microsoft reckons the power-saving technology onboard the device can provide 'months of use' without the need for replacement. When the power does eventually begin to fade, you're given plenty of warning, as the battery life indicator in the 'IntelliPoint' software will flash when 34 percent of the power is left, then again at 14 percent.

With two channels to protect you from interference with other devices, the IntelliMouse is perhaps the best you'll see in an optical mouse and is a real winner. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer
PRICE: £54.99
TEL: N/A
URL: www.microsoft.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★★★
OVERALL **89%**

✔ Incredibly comfortable to use and delivers pinpoint accuracy

✖ Might be a bit bulky for limp-wristed users

BT Broadband is up to ten times faster than standard dial-up Internet, so now you can download the latest music videos from Vidzone.tv in a flash. Connection and one month's rental are free if you sign up by 30th September. You can also save £10 on your modem by ordering online. Broadband your music horizons.

BT

More Connections. More Possibilities.

0800 800 060 bt.com/btbroadband
Quoting PPI18I

Subscription costs for vidzone.tv apply. Other conditions apply.

CD contents

Welcome...

THERE'S NO DOUBT about it, Dreamweaver MX is one powerful Web-authoring application. However, it's only really as good or as useful as whoever chooses to use it. So this month we've decided to provide a first-class resource for getting the most out of Macromedia's giant. Matt Pizzi's 'Dreamweaver MX Essentials' is a single chapter extract in PDF format, and takes you on a whistle-stop tour of the key topics. Everything from coding in HTML, inserting page elements such as links to creating rollover images is included, with illustrations to aid your learning. You can then discover how to cover your Web-surfing tracks with a copy of Windows and Internet Washer Pro, before succumbing to any PC paranoia with our haul of security suites.

Matt Budd, Multimedia Editor
mattb@paragon.co.uk

How to use the disc

The minimum recommended specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 32Mb RAM, 16-bit colour, Windows 95/98/Me, Intel Pentium or compatible P166. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the Start menu, select RUN and then type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Damaged discs
We will be pleased to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs
If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you a replacement disc. Email **subs@paragon.co.uk** quoting the magazine and issue number, along with your full postal address and daytime phone number.

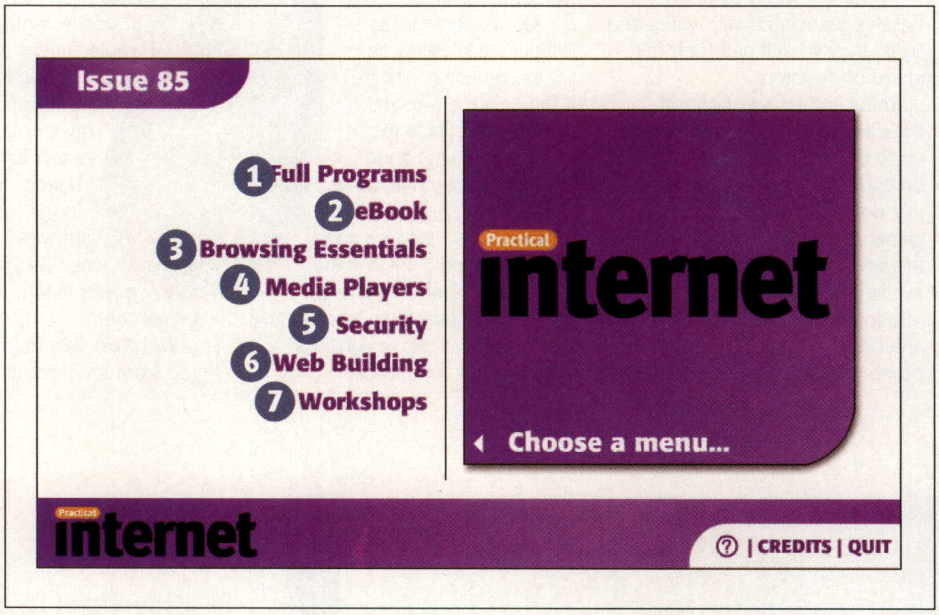
Problems using the disc
If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily. Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email. Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone **01202 200259**.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP. Please note that we do not support Windows 3.1/ Windows 95/ Windows NT or Windows 2000 Operating Systems.

The CD logo

Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

On the CD this month...



1 FULL PROGRAMS
Trellian FTP
Windows and Internet Washer Pro

Upload your files more efficiently than ever before, and prevent prying eyes from seeing what you've been up to on the Net.

3 BROWSING ESSENTIALS
Acrobat Reader 6
Download Accelerator Plus 5.3
Eudora 5.2
ICQ Lite
KaZaA Media Desktop
Netscape 7.02
Opera 6.04
Shockwave Player 8
Spyware Blaster

The tools you can't live without to surf the Web effectively. From plug-ins to browsers to email, you'll find everything you need here.

2 EBOOK
Macromedia Dreamweaver MX Unleashed

Learn to get more from Dreamweaver MX with our sample chapter from this excellent book. The chapter is in PDF format, so install Acrobat Reader 6 first if you don't have it already.

4 MEDIA PLAYERS
Ashampoo Media Player and 1.85
CoolPlayer 1.0
DivX Video Bundle 5.0.5
FreeMP3 Player 2.25
MP3CoolPlay 2.6
MusicMatch Jukebox 8.0
Quintessential Player 3.5
RealOne Free Player 2.0
Rosoft Media Player 3.1.2
Zoom Player 2.8

Get more from your MP3s and video files with this collection of media-enhancing utilities, programs and tools. From basic players through to high-end tools, you'll be transported to multimedia heaven with this lot.

5 PROTECT YOUR PC
123 Password Recovery 3.01
Access Denied 3.4
Ad-aware 6.0
Anti-Trojan 5.5.407
Avast 4 Home Edition 4.0.235
Basic SignupShield 1.5
BestCrypt 7.08.4
BlackICE PC Protection 3.5
Cookie Pal 1.7
CyberPatrol 6.1
CyberScrub 3.0
Dreadlock Privacy 4.2
eMailTrackerPro 2.0
Folder Lock 4.27.1
Ghost Keylogger 3.7
HTTP-Tunnel 2.3.1.587
iProtect You Pro 4.02
OmniVPN 1.5.6
PAL PC Tracker Lite 1.01
Panda Antivirus Platinum 7.04.02
PC Security 5.1
PurgeIE 5.01
Quick Hide Windows 1.5
Quicky Password Generator 1.2
Signature995 2.0
SnapKey Parental Internet Monitor 2.0
Sure Delete 5.1
SurfSpy 1.0
Sygate Personal Firewall 5.0
Vcatch Virus Catcher Basic 5.0.19
Vcatch Web Site Watchman 4.9
Win-Spy 7.2.3

With so many virus outbreaks hitting the headlines all over the world recently, it really pays to be safe these days. That's why we've assembled a list of 30 must-have security tools to ensure that you stay safe when online – including anti-virus, firewalls and much more.

6 WEB-BUILDING ESSENTIALS
ACDSee 5.0
CoffeeCup Firestarter 5.0
CoffeeCup Free HTML 6.0
Dreamweaver MX
Irfanview 3.8
Web Counter 5.0
Xara Webstyle 3.1

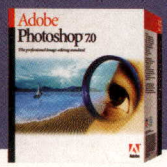
If you're looking to get started on your next Web masterpiece, look no further than this compact collection of essential design tools.

7 WORKSHOPS
4c Vision 3.0
Active Webcam 3.7
Dreamweaver MX
ICQ Lite
Macromedia Contribute 2
Photoshop 7
Photoshop Project Files

All the tools and files you need to follow the browsing and Webmaster workshops in this month's magazine.

Try these

Photoshop 7, Trial
Suitable for creating Web art or performing photo editing, Photoshop 7 comes with enhanced vector tools for shapes and text, with stacks of incredible tools and effects.



Acrobat Reader 6, Freeware
Adobe's latest PDF browser will allow you to view and print documents on many different systems. You can also play back embedded multimedia content such as MP3, and organising a collection of eBooks is possible as well.

Macromedia Contribute 2, Trial
Let the intense stress associated with updating Web sites be banished by this intuitive program. Users of all abilities won't find page editing and republishing easier anywhere else, with connection wizards and drag n' drop features making it a breeze to use.

Windows and Internet Washer Pro

REMOVE THE MUCKY PAW-PRINTS FROM ALL OVER YOUR MACHINE WITH THIS EFFECTIVE PROGRAM, AND STOP ANYONE FROM FINDING OUT ANYTHING ABOUT WHERE YOU'VE BEEN ONLINE

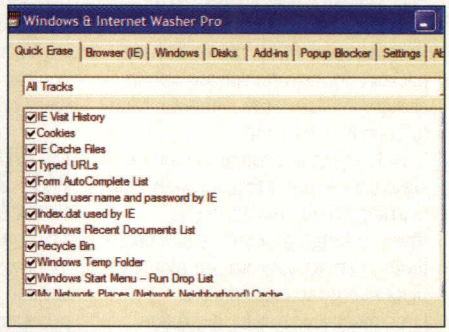
YOU MIGHT FIND it a bit disconcerting if someone or something was recording your every move. Hollywood celebrities regularly throw restraining orders at assorted weirdos who stalk or trail their activities, so why should PCs be different? Thankfully, you won't need to take such legal action against your trusty machine, as Windows and Internet Washer Pro provides all you need to throw it off your scent.

It'll truly amaze you to realise that virtually anything you do online and offline, like using programs or opening files, leaves traceable data. Windows and Internet Washer Pro is designed to completely scrub such information permanently and safely, preventing anyone else from archiving your activities.

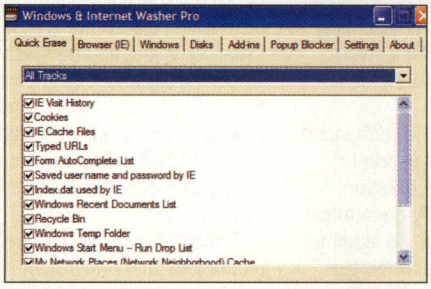
With support for multiple browsers and a functional interface, the program manages to lift fingerprints from areas that even disk formatting cannot erase. All manner of Registry content can be removed, from Windows user passwords to items within drop-down entry lists like the Run menu. A number of exclusive features make covering your surfing tracks impossible, with history, cookies, cache files, typed URLs and connection passwords all taken care of. You are also able to banish residual information from free disk space and ditch virtual memory 'swap' files, while an included pop-up blocker kills adverts.

Windows and Internet Washer Pro will even speed up your Web and general performance by de-clogging your system of temporary files.

Couple this with the option to shred and delete files completely, and you have a program not to be messed with!

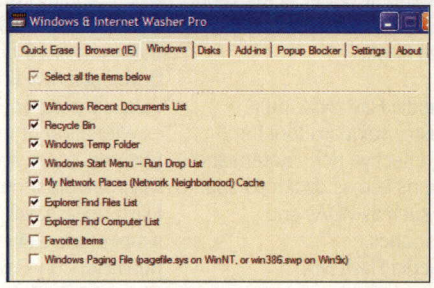

Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings
All Tracks
IE Visit History
Cookies
IE Cache Files
Typed URLs
Form AutoComplete List
Saved user name and password by IE
Index.dat used by IE
Windows Recent Documents List
Recycle Bin
Windows Temp Folder
Windows Start Menu – Run Drop List

How to set up Windows and Internet Washer Pro


Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings | About
All Tracks
IE Visit History
Cookies
IE Cache Files
Typed URLs
Form AutoComplete List
Saved user name and password by IE
Index.dat used by IE
Windows Recent Documents List
Recycle Bin
Windows Temp Folder
Windows Start Menu – Run Drop List

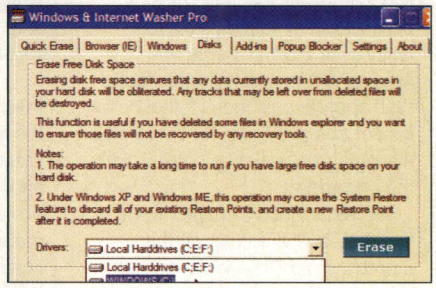
1 Quick fix

The Quick Erase pane lists all standard areas of the program. You can use a profile on the drop-down menu, or simply tick all items you want removed before hitting 'Erase'.


Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings | About
Select all the items below
Windows Recent Documents List
Recycle Bin
Windows Temp Folder
Windows Start Menu – Run Drop List
My Network Places (Network Neighborhood) Cache
Explorer Find Files List
Explorer Find Computer List
Favorite Items
Windows Paging File (pagefile.sys on WinNT, or win386.swp on Win9x)

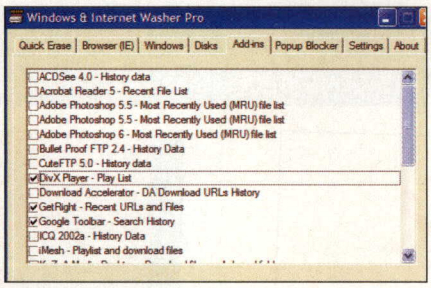
2 Take your pick

On the Browser and Windows tabs you can view removable items by group. Each area can be chosen, like the Recent Documents list, with 'Erase' confirming the action.


Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings | About
Erase Free Disk Space
Erasing disk free space ensures that any data currently stored in unallocated space in your hard disk will be obliterated. Any tracks that may be left over from deleted files will be destroyed.
This function is useful if you have deleted some files in Windows explorer and you want to ensure those files will not be recovered by any recovery tools.
Notes:
1. The operation may take a long time to run if you have large free disk space on your hard disk.
2. Under Windows XP and Windows ME, this operation may cause the System Restore feature to discard all of your existing Restore Points, and create a new Restore Point after it is completed.
Drivers:
Local Harddrives (C;E;F;)
Erase

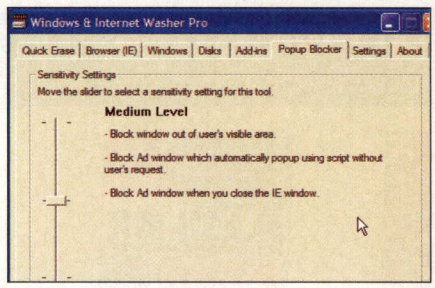
3 Spaced out

One of the most useful features is under the Disks tab. You can choose a drive that you want unallocated data removed from. This prevents future recovery. Click 'Erase' to start.


Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings | About
ACDSee 4.0 - History data
Acrobat Reader 5 - Recent File List
Adobe Photoshop 5.5 - Most Recently Used (MRU) file list
Adobe Photoshop 5.5 - Most Recently Used (MRU) file list
Adobe Photoshop 6 - Most Recently Used (MRU) file list
Bullet Proof FTP 2.4 - History Data
CuteFTP 5.0 - History data
DivX Player - Play List
Download Accelerator - DA Download URLs History
GetRight - Recent URLs and Files
Google Toolbar - Search History
ICQ 2002a - History Data
iMesh - Playlist and download files

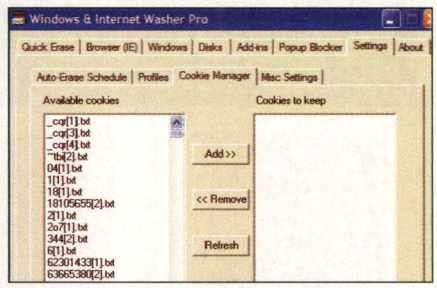
4 Add-ins

The Add-ins list lets you tinker with extra software or plug-ins on your PC. This software will be responsible for unwanted items, so here you can pick out data you wish to get rid of.


Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings | About
Sensitivity Settings
Move the slider to select a sensitivity setting for this tool.
Medium Level
- Block window out of user's visible area.
- Block Ad window which automatically popup using script without user's request.
- Block Ad window when you close the IE window.

5 Pop-up stop

A handy adjustable pop-up blocker is included. On the default setting, advert windows will be intercepted even if they are hidden, or once the browser window is shut.


Windows & Internet Washer Pro
Quick Erase | Browser (IE) | Windows | Disks | Add-ins | Popup Blocker | Settings | About
Auto-Erase Schedule | Profiles | Cookie Manager | Misc Settings
Available cookies
Cookies to keep
Add >>
<< Remove
Refresh

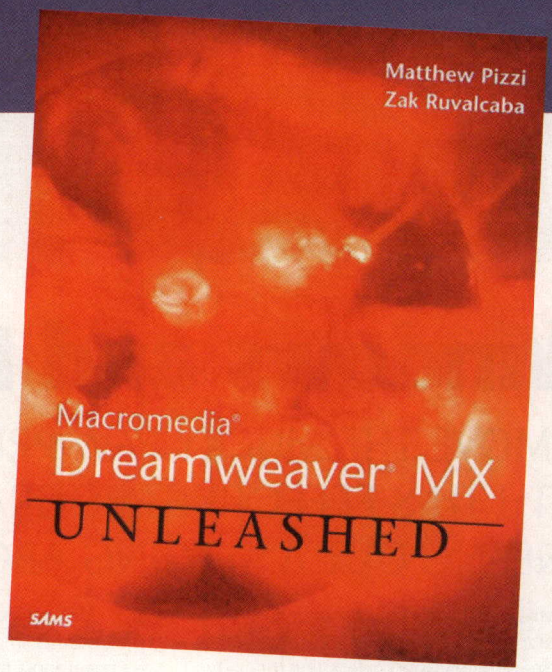
6 Cookie cutter

The program makes it easy to organise your cookies via the Settings tab. You will see a list of all items on the left and you can pick those to keep by clicking 'Add' and 'Remove'.

CD contents

CD highlights

Macromedia Dreamweaver MX unleashed



MASTER THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF MACROMEDIA'S MIGHTY WEB EDITOR WITH THE FREE EBOOK ON THIS MONTH'S DISC, TAKEN FROM THIS EYE-OPENING DREAMWEAVER MX TOME

AS POSSIBLY THE greatest Web-authoring tool on the planet, Dreamweaver MX is the must-have package for anyone serious about creating a decent site without having to code it all by hand.

Although the program is a darn sight easier to get to grips with than learning HTML, mastering its massive range of features can take time. Thankfully, there are plenty of places to go to extend your Dreamweaver knowledge. Aside from *Practical Internet*, of course, one of the best resources you'll find is *Macromedia Dreamweaver MX Unleashed*, by Matthew Pizzi and Zak Ruvalcaba. The book delves into the many powerful features of Dreamweaver MX, helping you to create sophisticated Web applications and is full of insider tips and tricks for designing, managing and developing sites with the application.

We've included a chapter from the book in PDF format on this month's cover CD, which you can view using Adobe Acrobat Reader. 'Dreamweaver MX Essentials' covers the core principles of the program including working in the coding environment, working with hyperlinks, images on the Web, navigation bars and HTML styles. If you're interested in buying the book, you can purchase it for £36.99 from **www.pearsoned.co.uk**.

Is Macromedia Flash MX 2004 upgrade worthy?

Macromedia is doing everything in its power to make the newest version of Flash irresistible to the product's estimated one million current users by loading it with a slew of new features and creating an entirely new market for the already popular program. Designers and developers will soon get to choose between two versions of Flash:

- Macromedia Flash MX 2004 – the industry standard tool for creating effective rich content and applications across desktops and devices such as PDAs and mobile phones.
- Macromedia Flash MX Professional 2004 – the luxury model, which comes equipped with all of Macromedia Flash 2004's standard features, as well as robust development tools such as screens, components, professional video support and tools for device development.

Once a mere animation tool used by cutting edge designers to create visually stimulating yet slow-to-load 'skip intros' for avant-garde Web sites, Flash has evolved into a sophisticated, fully featured development and design environment used by everyone from code-phobic designers to ActionScript-loving software developers. With the new release of Macromedia Flash MX 2004 and the creation of a new market with Macromedia Flash MX Professional 2004, Macromedia is anticipating that even more designers and developers will flock to this versatile program.

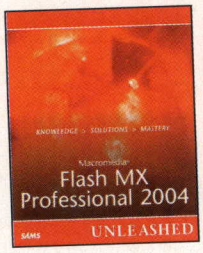
With a ton of new and enhanced features, users who upgrade to Macromedia's 'next generation' Flash release, will likely encounter a steep learning curve. As leading publishers on Flash technologies, Macromedia Press, Peachpit Press, New Riders and Sams have all the answers you need. Authors like Matt Pizzi (who wrote *Macromedia Dreamweaver MX Unleashed*) will help upgraders get up to speed quickly and thoroughly with tomes such as *Macromedia Flash MX Professional 2004 Unleashed* (Sams Publishing; 0-672-32606-X), a comprehensive reference full of examples for every situation.

Another upcoming Flash MX Professional 2004 book that should find itself on every power user's bookshelf is *Flash MX 2004 ActionScript 2.0 Dictionary* (Macromedia Press; 0-321-21344-0), a highly indexed reference covering every aspect of the new language. Beginners can opt for two learning methodologies: the task-based reference approach of the best-selling *Macromedia Flash MX 2004 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual Quickstart Guide* (Peachpit Press; 0-321-21344-0) or the project-based tutorial *Macromedia Flash MX 2004: Training from the Source* (Macromedia Press; 0-321-21342-4).

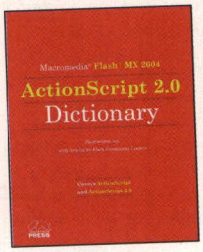
Finally, to learn all the cool techniques that only the most experienced Flash users know, pick up *Macromedia Flash MX 2004 Killer Tips* (New Riders; 0-7357-1383-9), and you'll feel like a pro in no time.

FIVE COOL FLASH MX 2004 TITLES

WHY NOT FURTHER YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF MACROMEDIA'S QUINTESSENTIAL WEB GRAPHICS PACKAGE BY CHECKING OUT THESE BOOKS



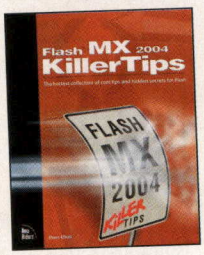
Macromedia Flash MX Professional 2004 Unleashed



Flash MX 2004 ActionScript 2.0 Dictionary

Macromedia Flash MX 2004 for Windows and Macintosh

Macromedia Flash MX 2004: Training from the Source



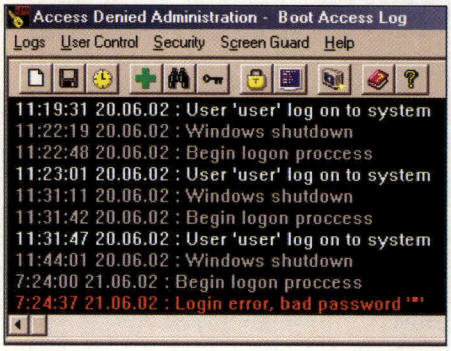
Macromedia Flash MX 2004 Killer Tips

Security toolkit

LOCK YOUR PC UP LIKE FORT KNOX AND KEEP MEDDLESOME USERS AWAY

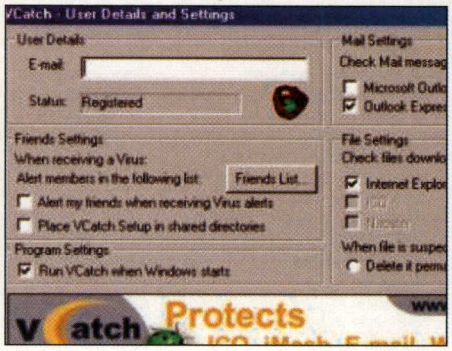
Access Denied 3.4

If you're one of those people who hates the thought of what someone else might do to your machine then learn to share! Or, alternatively keep unwanted intruders at bay with this stubborn application. It will prevent anyone from booting up without a valid username or password. Completely impenetrable under most versions of Windows, it offers up to 450 user accounts and a wealth of administrator settings. There's also full password encryption, screensaver integration and the ability to colour highlight log files. With all this and more, you should soon regard Access Denied as the premier security guard for your data.


Access Denied Administration - Boot Access Log
Logs User Control Security Screen Guard Help
11:19:31 20.06.02 : User 'user' log on to system
11:22:19 20.06.02 : Windows shutdown
11:22:48 20.06.02 : Begin logon proccess
11:23:01 20.06.02 : User 'user' log on to system
11:31:11 20.06.02 : Windows shutdown
11:31:42 20.06.02 : Begin logon proccess
11:31:47 20.06.02 : User 'user' log on to system
11:44:01 20.06.02 : Windows shutdown
7:24:00 21.06.02 : Begin logon proccess
7:24:37 21.06.02 : Login error, bad password

Vcatch Virus Catcher Basic 5.0.19

Viruses are a big pest these days, with some of the more notorious even making world headlines. It only serves as an important reminder to those users whose machines aren't adequately protected to wise up. With great programs like Vcatch about there's no excuse – its ability to check all incoming files should see you safe. It scans email, Web mail, instant messaging and file-sharing applications for any nasties, while automatically updating its defences. Patches are also included for the most common worms and any suspicious items like attachments can be deleted or quarantined immediately.



Trellian FTP

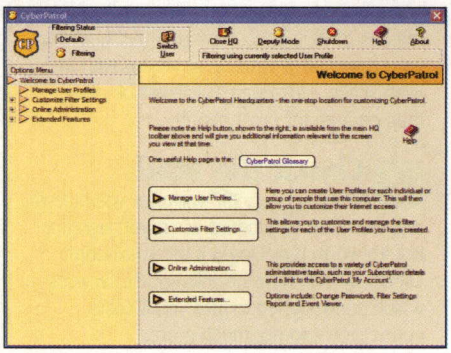
GET YOUR FILES FROM A TO B WITH THIS POPULAR AND USEFUL TRANSFER CLIENT

FTP, or File Transfer Protocol, can seem incredibly intimidating to those who haven't used it. Of course this would only refer to any deliberate use, because it is the standard for stuff like downloading files on the Web. It's also needed when publishing a site to a server, which is just one of the things this program from Trellian allows you to do. You'll quickly be able to shift files from your machine to any FTP server online. There's also a mighty list of available sites that you can connect to get hold of drivers, software and other goodies. Equipped with next-generation features like drag and drop transfer, the facility to download from multiple sources and the integrated Connection Hammer also make a difference. Here you can initiate as many transfers as you need to, while the ability to jump on a vacated connection should give you the upper hand on busy sites. What's more, the program's Compare tool will upload missing or updated files to your chosen server on request, with a Resume function enabling you to finish halted downloads. Everyone will find its simple and intuitive interface easy to follow, making it the perfect companion for anyone starting out with FTP.

To register the program please visit www.guildsoft.co.uk/cmp/309GUPIN1.

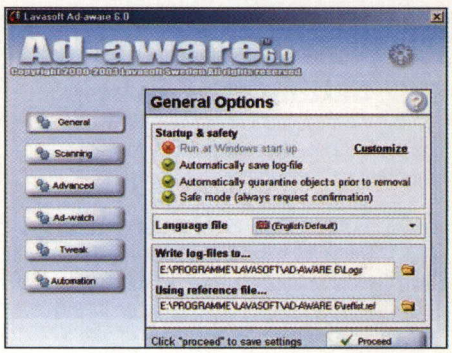
CyberPatrol 6.1

One of the best and worst aspects of the Net is the freedom. Where children are concerned this can mean that access to unsuitable material is possible. However, if you're hoping to protect any vulnerable users from the dodgier aspects of the WWW, CyberPatrol is at hand. Essentially a parental filter, the program lets you define harmful sites and successfully block them or monitor chat activity. Time online can also be restricted effectively, along with preventing certain programs or games from running. Importantly, it can also censor explicit language used during online communication and prevent kids from revealing contact details.



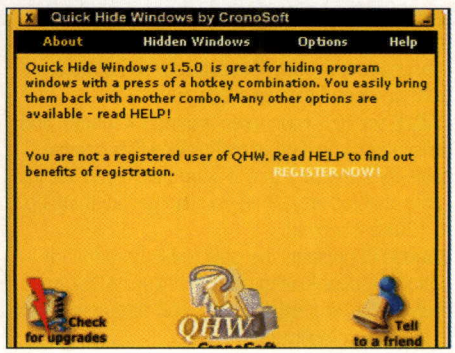
Ad-aware 6.0

It's often unbelievable what corporations will do to establish their market. Adware, similar to spyware, consists of invisible components that sit on your machine and gather information. This normally relates to what browsing software you use and what surfing habits you have, etc. Unfortunately it can clog your machine's resources and obviously compromise your online privacy. Ad-aware will scan RAM, storage drives and the Registry for anything unwanted and rapidly get rid of it. Version 6 has a redesigned interface to make things even easier, while comprehensive quarantine and backup facilities maintain security.



Quick Hide Windows 1.5

This little gem from Cronosoft should provide a safe haven for anyone looking to keep their computer activity under wraps. Suitable for home and office use, the program is able to quickly and conveniently make incriminating data, documents or applications vanish from your screen. As well as pushing browser windows out of sight while conducting downloads, you can also bury office programs while they run. The Windows desktop can be password-immobilised on boot or via shortcut keys, while the Start button or taskbar can be totally removed. It's all topped off with an intuitive interface which should help you get started in no time.


Quick Hide Windows by CronoSoft
About
Hidden Windows
Options
Help
Quick Hide Windows v1.5.0 is great for hiding program windows with a press of a hotkey combination. You easily bring them back with another combo. Many other options are available - read HELP!
You are not a registered user of QHW. Read HELP to find out benefits of registration.
REGISTER NOW!
Check for upgrades
QHW
Tell to a friend

Buyers' guide

A comprehensive resource covering all kinds of Internet service providers and what they can offer you. Compare them all at a glance...

Using this guide

CHOOSING A NEW ISP is never the easiest task in the world, which is why we have trawled the Web to bring you 400 of the top deals currently available in the UK. If you're struggling to decide which type of deal to go for, read the step-by-step guide below, and you should be able to find ISP salvation in a matter of minutes.

Help and advice

If, for whatever reason, this still doesn't provide you with the answer to your ISP dreams, we've gone that little bit further to alleviate your concerns. At the side of every listings page, you'll find a top ISP tip from a *Practical Internet* expert. We don't just name the ISPs, either – we've convinced our team and regular contributors to tell you exactly why they recommend their favourite ISP to you. So, if you can't make up your mind between Pipex and BTOpenworld, read on – we guarantee you'll find the advice helpful and beneficial. More importantly, it should go some small way to helping you make the ISP decision you've been stalling on for months and months...

Which ISP?

With thousands of ISPs all offering great-looking deals, it's tough to find the right service. This guide helps decide which is best for you

BROADBAND: ADSL

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
0800 Dial ADSL	www.0800dial.com	£28.99	£65.00	15	10	Yes
ABC Net ADSL Home 500 Self Install	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£34.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Home 500 Self Install 20:1	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£59.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Home Single User 500 USB	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£34.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office 1000 Self Install	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£94.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office Multi User 1000	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£99.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office Multi User 500	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£69.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
Abel Always Routed1000	www.abelalways.co.uk	£109.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always Routed2000	www.abelalways.co.uk	£135.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always Routed500	www.abelalways.co.uk	£75.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always USB	www.abelalways.co.uk	£25.50	£210.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
ADSL NOW! 1000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£139.77	N/A	0	0	No
ADSL NOW! 500 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£92.77	N/A	0	0	No
ADSL4Home! (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£29.32	£58.69	0	0	No
Albion.net ADSL 1000 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£109.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 2000 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£139.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 500 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£79.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 500 Single	www.albion.co.uk	£39.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Allcomm Home 500	www.allcomm.co.uk	£25.00	£150.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S1000	www.allcomm.co.uk	£120.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S2000	www.allcomm.co.uk	£150.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S500	www.allcomm.co.uk	£85.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Andrews & Arnold Home 500	www.aa.nu	£58.75	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Andrews & Arnold Home 500 Lite (Self-Install)	www.aa.nu	£29.95	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Andrews & Arnold Office 500 (Self-Install)	www.aa.nu	£75.00	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
AOL Broadband (Self Install)	www.aol.co.uk	£27.99	£85.00	7	14	Yes
applica Connect1000	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£99.00	£25.00	50	0	NK
applica Connect500	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£65.00	£25.00	50	0	NK
applica ConnectSolo	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£26.99	£25.00	50	0	NK
Aviators ADSL Home 500	www.aviators.net	£29.00	£199.00	0	0	NK
BISCIT EUSB 500 (Engineer Installed)	www.biscit.com	£23.95	£210.00	0	20	NK

Quick steps to picking your ideal Internet service provider

1 What kind of broadband?

ADSL is currently the fastest-growing connection type in the UK. It relies on you shelling out for BT to 'activate' your line, then paying a monthly subscription. Expect download speeds of up to 60Kb a second with an ADSL line.

CABLE services have been around for longer, and utilise the same kind of technology that powers cable TV into many people's homes. If you live in a cable-enabled area, then you can get anything up to 120Kb a second.

SATELLITE presents the only viable broadband option for people who can't get either ADSL or cable. Costs are high, though, and setting up tends to be very complicated.

2 Can you get it?

Many people can't get ADSL or cable access because it is unavailable in their area. If this is you, take a look at our rundown of unmetered and pay-as-you-go services.

3 Getting speedy help

Worried you'll need your ISP's technical help a lot? Use our guide to find yourself an inexpensive support line.

4 Are you a Quake king?

Net gaming is coming back into the limelight with the increasing popularity of broadband. Most broadband ISPs allow you to game on their time, but check their Web site first to make sure.

5 Building a Web site?

The days when you got a free domain name with every account you set up are long gone, but you can still get your hands on masses of Web space for nothing. Check that your potential provider is generous with free Web space – although 10Mb will be more than enough for most people.

6 Check the mail

Virtually every ISP will offer you at least one POP3 email account when you sign up, but it's worth checking out the small print, especially with new 'no-frills' ADSL services which are designed to give you a basic connection and not much more.

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ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
BISCIT Home USB 500 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£23.40	£15.00	0	20	NK
BISCIT OFFICE S1000 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£99.95	£28.00	0	50	NK
BISCIT USB S500 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£74.95	£25.00	0	50	Yes
Boltblue Broadband (Self-Install)	www.boltblue.com	£27.99	N/A	5	15	Yes
Breathepro ADSL Connect (Self Install)	www.breathe.com	£25.99	£65.00	25	25	Yes
BT Broadband	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£27.00	£30.00	0	0	No
BTopenworld Business 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business1000PLUS	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£119.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	£210.00	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500PLUS	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£79.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld Home Plug & Go - Line Only (Self-install)	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	N/A	10	50	Yes
BTopenworld home500	www.btopenworld.com/	£29.99	£250.00	10	50	Yes
BTopenworld Home 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	www.btopenworld.com/	£29.99	N/A	10	50	Yes
Business Serve 1000 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£87.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve 2000 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£107.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve 500 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£67.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve SOHO Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£29.32	£60.00	0	0	No
CharityDAYS Donate ADSL Home	www.charitydays.net	£30.99	£41.13	Unlimited	250	Yes
Eclipse ADSL Connect 500lite (Self-Install)	www.eclipse.net.uk	£22.75	£25.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
edNET Multi User 500	www.ednet.co.uk	£99.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Multi User 2000	www.ednet.co.uk	£129.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Multi User 1000	www.ednet.co.uk	£199.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Single User 500	www.ednet.co.uk	£29.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
fairADSL (Self-Install)	www.fairadsl.co.uk	£18.99	£33.00	1	0	Yes
Firenet Speedwire 500	www.firenet.uk.net	£26.50	£75.00	Unlimited	10	Yes
Firstnet Single User	www.firstnet.net.uk	£75.00	£65.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
Force9 ADSL 500	www.force9.co.uk	£64.63	£305.50	Unlimited	500	Yes
Force9 ADSL Home	www.force9.co.uk	£22.99	£246.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Home - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£22.99	£41.13	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Netstart	www.force9.co.uk	£47.00	£176.25	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£35.24	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£64.63	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Free-Online ADSL 500	www.free-online.co.uk	£64.63	£305.50	Unlimited	500	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Netstart	www.free-online.co.uk	£47.00	£176.25	Unlimited	500	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.free-online.co.uk	£35.24	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.free-online.co.uk	£64.63	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Freedom2Surf Pure IP 1000 (Self-Install)	www.freedom2surf.net	£95.00	£29.99	20	20	Yes
Freedom2Surf Pure IP 500 (Self-Install)	www.freedom2surf.net	£60.00	£29.99	20	20	Yes
Freeserve Broadband (Self-Install)	www.freeserve.com	£27.99	£84.99	Unlimited	150	Yes
Gconnect Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£110.00	£30.00	1	20	NK
Gconnect Business 2000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£140.00	£30.00	1	20	NK
Gconnect Business 500 Single User (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£29.99	£30	1	20	NK
Gconnect Micro Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£50.00	£30	1	20	NK
Go-Plus Fast (Self-Install)	www.go-plus.net	£25.00	£60.00	Unlimited	10	Yes
Inweb Home 500 (Self-Install)	www.inweb.net.uk	£28.99	£76.38	Unlimited	10	Yes
Jings 500U PLUS	www.jings.com	£59.99	£180.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
Jolt Home500 Lite (Self Install)	www.jolt.co.uk	£22.99	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Jolt Office500 (Self Install)	www.jolt.co.uk	£29.99	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Kingston Karoo RapidTime Pro	www.kingstonbiz.net	£38.99	£150.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
MacAce AlwaysOn@Home ADSL500 (Self-Install)	www.macace.net	£29.99	£58.75	5	0	No
Madasafish Dazzle 500U 24	www.madasafish.com	£55.95	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
Madasafish Dazzle 500U PLUS	www.madasafish.com	£59.99	£180.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
Mailbox Business Connect 500	www.mailbox.net.uk	£75.00	£135.00	10	25	Yes
Mailbox BusinessWire 500 (Self-Install)	www.mailbox.net.uk	£75.00	£30.00	10	25	Yes
Mailbox Standard Connect 500	www.mailbox.net.uk	£34.08	£30.00	10	25	Yes
MetroNet 500	www.metronet.co.uk	£35.99	£176.25	5	20	Yes
MetroNet S500	www.metronet.co.uk	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
MetroNet S1000	www.metronet.co.uk	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
Netscalibur SoHo 500 (Self Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£34.08	£64.63	Unlimited	20	Yes
Netscalibur Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£158.63	£323.13	Unlimited	20	Yes
Netscalibur Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£116.33	£323.13	Unlimited	20	Yes
NewNet Business 1000 (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£92.00	£25.00	Unlimited	125	Yes
NewNet Business 500 (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£61.00	£25.00	Unlimited	125	Yes
NewNet Business 500 PLUS	www.newnet.co.uk	£88.13	£305.50	Unlimited	100	Yes
NewNet Home 500 M (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£32.00	£25.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
NewNet Home 500 N (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£24.00	£25.00	5	0	Yes
NewNet Home 500 S (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£27.00	£25.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
OneTel Unplugged 500 Plug & Play (Self-Install)	www.onetel.co.uk	£27.99	£60.00	1	0	No
Onyx Business Broadband Silver (Self-Install)	www.onyx-adsl.net	£82.25	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
Onyx Home Office Broadband (Self-Install)	www.onyx-adsl.net	£29.99	N/A	Unlimited	0	Yes
Pipemedia USB 512K	www.adsl.uk.net	£57.58	£235.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
PIPEX Business 500	www.pipex.com	£82.19	£323.13	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£76.32	£70.50	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Home Office (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£29.32	£70.50	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Solo (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£23.44	£58.75	12	50	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 500	www.plus.net	£88.13	£152.75	Unlimited	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Home	www.plus.net	£22.99	£246.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 1000	www.plus.net	£129.25	£152.75	Unlimited	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Netstart	www.plus.net	£246.75	£35.24	Unlimited	250	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Home Surf - Self Install	www.plus.net	£19.99	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.plus.net	£35.24	£29.38	Unlimited	250	Yes

ISP TOP PICK

NAME.....Thomas Watson
POSITION.....Editor
ISP.....BTOpenworld Broadband (www.btopenworld.com)

After signing up for BTOpenworld Broadband, I had to wait a while to have my account activated – but this was as much to do with my circumstances as anything else. When the service finally kicked in, I was pleasantly surprised. In the six months I've been using the service, my BTOpenworld account has connected to the Net on the first attempt every time. Some 50:1 deals seem to grind to a halt during busy times, but I've been able to download at a steady 60Kb a second no matter when I connect.

The only slight gripe I've had with the service was when I couldn't connect one Sunday. I tried repeatedly to get in touch with the technical helpline, but I kept being disconnected after being put on hold for six minutes. Thankfully, I quickly realised that there was nothing wrong with the broadband – it turned out that my Fujitsu modem had given up the ghost after being bullied into submission by my extravagant download demands!

I would recommend BTOpenworld to anyone – it's one of the most stable and fastest connections around, and the free spam blocking is a bonus as well.

BTopenworld
INTERNET ACCESS, SERVICES & PRODUCTS
Order BT Openworld Broadband Home 500 Plug & Go and save £29.99 – that's one month free!
Click here to save
FOR YOUR HOME
FOR YOUR BUSINESS

It's one of the biggest ISPs in the UK, and BTOpenworld offers a damn fine ADSL service for a reasonable price

The verdict

Speed: ★★★★★
Connection stability: ★★★★★
Technical support: ★★★½☆
Value for money: ★★★★½

"BTOpenworld broadband is one of the fastest and most stable services around"

OVERALL 90%

Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

ISP TOP PICK

NAME.....James Thornton
POSITION.....Features Editor
ISP.....Breathe Anywhere (www.breathe.com)

After trying out a few different ISPs in the last few months, I'm now connected to the Net via Breathe Anywhere. I had a shot at UK Online's OpenSurf unmetered service earlier in the year, and while I found it pretty reliable, I decided I wasn't using the Net at home enough for me to justify the £13.99 fee I was paying for the service. After all, I'm beavering away on the Net all day in the office, so the last thing I want to do when I get home is stare at Web sites.

As a result, I decided to plump for Breathe's Anywhere service, where I only pay for the Internet call charges. Since then I haven't looked back, as I now only end up spending about a fiver a month on Net access, which means I can treat myself to an extra couple of coals on the fire during the winter months.

In terms of reliability, I've experienced very few problems with the service, though the email server did go down a couple of weeks ago which caused me a few problems. Having said that, the technical support department was very friendly and on the ball when I rang the helpline, which is great considering it's only charged at local rates, unlike some other ISPs I've been with which have premium rate numbers.

Unmetered access may offer the best option for some people, but many are better off with a standard 0845 account

The verdict

Speed: ★★★½☆
Connection stability: ★★★★½
Technical support: ★★★★½
Value for money: ★★★★½

"The technical support department is very friendly, even though it's only local rate"

OVERALL 84%

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
PlusNet ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.plus.net	£64.63	£29.38	Unlimited	500	Yes
Poptel Home Office Basic 500	www.poptel.coop	£41.07	£293.69	5	10	Yes
Poptel Home User Basic 500	www.poptel.coop	£35.19	£176.19	5	10	Yes
Poptel Office Standard 500	www.poptel.coop	£92.83	£305.50	5	10	Yes
Scotland4me	www.scotland4me.net	£29.38	£70.50	Unlimited	50	No
Silvermead Broadband (Self-Install)	www.silvermead.net	£28.99	£65.00	15	10	Yes
Sniff Out DreamTime (Self-Install)	www.sniffout.net	£23.49	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Sonnet Internet Office 1000 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£105.75	£70.50	500	250	Yes
Sonnet Internet Office 500 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£76.38	£70.50	500	250	Yes
Sonnet Internet Professional 500 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	£70.50	500	100	Yes
Star - Broad Star Remote	www.star.net.uk	£70.50	£293.75	0	0	No
Supanet - 0512Kbps	www.supanet.com	£29.99	£119.99	Unlimited	20	Yes
Timewarp ADSL Home User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£29.99	£58.75	1	10	Yes
Timewarp ADSL Online User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£28.20	£58.75	1	10	Yes
Timewarp ADSL SOHO User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£40.00	£58.75	3	20	Yes
Timewarp Office 500 (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£94.00	£58.75	3	50	Yes
Tiscali Broadband (Self-Install)	www.tiscali.co.uk	£19.99	£50.00	6	100	Yes
Tiscali Broadband Plus (Self-Install)	www.tiscali.co.uk	£27.99	N/A	6	100	Yes
Tiscali T500	www.tiscali.co.uk	£89.29	£305.50	Unlimited	50	Yes
UTV Clicksilver Business	u.tv	£35.25	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
UTV Clicksilver Residential	u.tv	£27.50	£49.50	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£64.63	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Home User (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£19.99	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£105.75	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 2000 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£159.25	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
VIA NETWORKS United Kingdom Basic 500 (Self-Install)	www.vianetworks.co.uk	£82.25	£58.75	30	50	Yes
Virgin.net Broadband (Self-Install)	www.virgin.net	£24.99	£39.99	5	10	Yes
Vispa Home 500 (Self-Install)	www.vispa.net	£28.99	£58.75	Unlimited	15	Yes
Vulture Capital ADSL Connect (Self-Install)	www.vcisp.net	£25.99	£65.00	25	25	Yes
ZenADSL Home (Self-Install)	www.zenadsl.com	£25.52	£25.00	5	50	Yes
ZenADSL Multi-User 512Kbps	www.zenadsl.com	£76.38	£305.50	5	50	Yes
ZenADSL Single-User 512Kbps	www.zenadsl.com	£29.99	£176.25	5	50	Yes
ZeNOC GamesStream 512	www.zenoc.net	£55.00	£100.00	5	20	Yes
ZeNOC WorkStream 512	www.zenoc.net	£115.00	£300.00	5	20	Yes

BROADBAND: CABLE

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
blueyonder broadband 1Mb	info.blueyonder.co.uk/	£39.99	£50.00	15	30	Yes
Blueyonder broadband 500	info.blueyonder.co.uk/	£29.99	£50.00	15	30	Yes
NTL 128K	www.ntl.co.uk	£14.99	£25.00	15	55	Yes
NTL 1Mb	www.ntl.co.uk	£49.99	N/A	15	55	Yes
NTL 600K	www.ntl.co.uk	£24.99	N/A	15	55	Yes

BROADBAND: SATELLITE

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
Bentley Walker Bronze Surfer	www.bentleywalker.com	£75.00	£100.00	0	0	No
BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/1	www.btopenworld.com/	£70.49	£1,056.33	20	20	Yes
BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/4	www.btopenworld.com/	£129.24	£1,526.33	100	20	Yes
Europe Online	www.europeonline.com	£6.36	N/A	5	0	Yes
HSIViaSat Home Edition	www.hsiviasat.com	£29.07	N/A	0	0	No
Mac-1 Internet USB Bronze	www.mac-1.com	£182.13	N/A	0	0	No
SatDrive	www.satdrive.com	£14.99	£399.00	0	0	No
Silvermead Satellite Broadband	www.silvermead.net	£34.99	£49.99	15	10	Yes
Skystorm	www.skystorm.net	£17.63	N/A	0	0	No
Starspeeder	www.starspeeder.co.uk	£17.63	N/A	0	0	No
Xantic	www.xanticbroadband.com	£29.38	£180.95	0	0	No

BROADBAND: WIRELESS

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
IAP Broadband	www.iap.uk.net	£29.99	£150.00	10	10	Yes
IAP Broadband X2	www.iap.uk.net	£39.99	£150.00	10	10	Yes
IAP Unmetered	www.iap.uk.net	£11.99	£150.00	5	5	Yes
IAP Unmetered X2	www.iap.uk.net	£19.99	£150.00	5	5	Yes
Liberty Broadband (business)	www.libertybroadband.co.uk	£111.61	£175.08	Unlimited	20	Yes
Liberty Broadband (consumer)	www.libertybroadband.co.uk	£46.99	£175.08	10	20	Yes

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0845 INTERNET PROVIDERS

NAME	URL	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V90	K64	K128
Abel GRATIS Plus	www.abelgratis.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
BlueCarrots Anywhere	www.bluecarrots.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
blueyonder	www.blueyonder.co.uk	15	30	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Breathepro Easyconnect	www.breathe.com	25	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
British Library Net	www.britishlibrary.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
BT Access	www.btclickforbusiness.com	10	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Home Free	www.charitydays.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Free	www.charitydays.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chilly Hippo	www.chilly-hippo.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
ClaraNET	www.clara.net	Unlimited	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clearsignals	www.clearsignals.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Club 24 Internet	www.club24.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dabs netdial	www.dabs.net	25	25	No	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Dabsol	www.dabs.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Demon Express Total (Self-Install)	www.demon.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate	NK	Yes	Yes
Devilnet United Kingdom	www.devilnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
EidosNet	www.eidosnet.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-Plus	www.e-plus.co.uk	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Euphony.net	www.euphony.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Everywhere Broadband	www.everywherebroadband.com	10	20	Yes	NK	NK	Yes	Yes
Fasthosts LoCall	dial.fasthosts.co.uk	Unlimited	200	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	No
Firenet	www.firenet.uk.net	15	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Flyer Internet	internet.flyer.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Force9 Business Free	www.force9.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Force9 Free	www.force9.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free United Kingdom	www.freeuk.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Freebeeb	www.beeb.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes	No
Freedom 2 Surf	www.freedom2surf.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeNEasy	www.freeneasy.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeNet	www.freenet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freenetname	www.freenetname.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
Freeola.net	www.freeola.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Business Free	www.free-online.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Free	www.free-online.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freeserve NoTies	www.freeserve.com	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
FreeUnited Kingdom	www.freeuk.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Freewire	www.freewire.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeZone	www.freezone.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Games Terminal	www.gterminal.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No	No
Go There Internet	www.gothere.uk.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
GoFree	www.gofree.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Go-Legend	www.go-legend.net	Unlimited	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
GPAnet	www.gpanet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hot-Toast	www.hot-toast.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
i12	www.i12.com	Unlimited	500	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
IofM.net	www.iofm.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
IXUnited Kingdom	www.ixuk.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
JellyPeople.com	www.jellypeople.com	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Loyal Mail	www.loyalmail.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	No
MacUnlimited	www.macunlimited.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mersinet	www.mersinet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Messages	www.messages.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Ministry of Sound	www.ministryofsound.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
MWfree.net	www.mwfree.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
MyETI	www.eti.uk.com	Unlimited	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
NASCR	www.nascr.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
NetDirect Online	www.instant.ndo.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
One Way Internet - PAYG	www.onewayinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Onet	www.onet.co.uk	Unlimited	30	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
OnlineServe Dial Lite	www.onlineserve.co.uk	Unlimited	10	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oxfree	www.oxfree.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Business Free	www.plus.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Free	www.plus.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prontoserve	www.Prontoserve.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	No	Yes	Yes
Qadisho	www.qadisho.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Rapidial	www.Rapidial.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
RugbyWeb	www.rugbyweb.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
Sniff Out Classic	www.sniffout.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sonnet Internet Just Dial	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
South West Net	www.swest.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Sparticus.net	www.sparticus.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supanet Classic	www.supanet.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
SurfAnytime	www.surfanytime.co.uk	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Tellnet	www.tellnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tiscali Pay As You Go	www.tiscali.co.uk	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Vispa Connect Valuetime	www.vispa.net	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vulture Capital Easy Connect	www.vcisp.net	25	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Waitrose.com	www.waitrose.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	No

ISP TOP PICK

NAME.....Danny McAleer
POSITION.....Contributor
ISP.....Pipex Dial
(www.dial.pipex.com)

I use Pipex Dial, and just a dial-up account. I'm by no means an ISP snob, though. I was fortunate enough to be in this journalism malarkey way back when Pipex Dial first started in the UK and I got a complimentary account for life because the magazine I was working on put a 30-day trial on its cover CD-ROM. It might not be the best, but it's free, so I've never really had an incentive to change :)

It must be said, though, that I've never actually been tempted to go elsewhere, even when the whole 0800 access came out, since Pipex does all I want, and has oodles of cool newsgroups. It's only recently, now broadband is so cheap, that I might change. But then again, Pipex does broadband, and it's about the same price as everywhere else...

I would also say that Pipex's NetMail service, where you can pick up your emails using a Web browser, is fantastic. It's recently been totally re-programmed and is a vast improvement on the old job. Also, the Web space and free public CGI scripts provided for things like form-mails, counters, and password protected areas are pretty smart.

Pipex has long been one of the most respected ISPs around, so it's hardly surprising that people stick with it for so long

The verdict

Speed: ★★★½☆
Connection stability: ★★★★½
Technical support: ★★★★½
Value for money: ★★★★½

"I've never been tempted to change, even when 0800 access came out"

OVERALL 87%

Buyers' guide

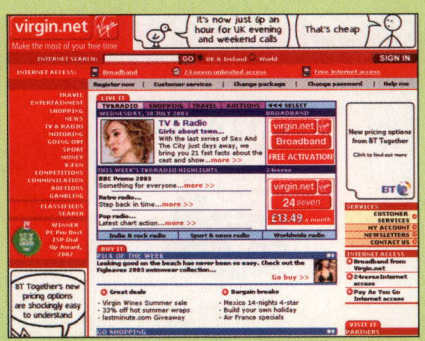
Which ISP?

ISP TOP PICK

NAME.....Mark Billen
POSITION.....Staff Writer
ISP.....Virgin.net (www.virgin.net)

It seems as though I've been with my ISP, Virgin.net, since the dawn of time. Unfortunately I probably wouldn't put this down to being unable to resist their unsurpassed service, but more to do with habit. When I did sign up with them I was at school doing my A-levels and needed the cheapest service I could get. Virgin appeared to be that, and not long after my loyalty to them was rewarded with free access.

I've never done all the benchmarking tests or consulted any industry statistics, but have always found them to be good. Considering that my PC is an antique running an embarrassing dial-up connection, I can't complain. Logging on to the servers is consistently successful, while unexpected hang-ups are very rare. They also offer an intuitive and helpful support site, with a generous amount of server space that I use for my own site. Again, email has been efficient, and it's been important for me to keep the same address all this time. However, I am beginning to suffer the frustration of spam and pop-ups to the point where change is inevitable. Hopefully I can ditch the relic for a new broadband powered setup very soon.



ISPs come and go, but many of us have been with the same one since we first ventured onto the Internet

The verdict

Speed: ★★★★★

Connection stability: ★★★★★

Technical support: ★★★★★

Value for money: ★★★★★

"Considering my PC is an antique running a dial-up connection, I can't complain"

OVERALL 87%

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

ISP	URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQ.	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
0800Dial Home User	www.0800dial.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
0800onlineserve	www.0800.onlineserve.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	10	Yes	Free
1066ad.com Maxi Surf	www.1066ad.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
1066ad.com Mini Surf	www.1066ad.com	£10.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
123ISP Standard	www.123isp.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
123ISP Twilight	www.123isp.co.uk	£4.95	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
123ISP Twin Lite	www.123isp.co.uk	£18.95	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
24-7Freecall	www.24-7freecall.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
4theNET Business Anytime	www.4thenet.co.uk	£23.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNet Unlimited 24/7	www.4thenet.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNET Unlimited Daytime	www.4thenet.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNET Unlimited Off-peak	www.4thenet.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Abel DIAL Anytime	www.abelalways.co.uk	£27.99	No	No	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 25p
Abel DIAL Leisuretime	www.abelalways.co.uk	£11.99	No	No	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 25p
AOL	www.aol.co.uk	£15.99	No	No	7	14	Yes	Free
Arsenal AnyTime	www.arsenal.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Arsenal Hometime	www.arsenal.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz BusinessTime	www.asian-biz.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz HomeTime	www.asian-biz.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz SurfTime Evenings & Weekends	www.asian-biz.net	£13.00	No	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Barclaycard.net	www.barclaycard.net	£12.95	Yes	Yes	5	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
BlueCarrots At Home	www.bluecarrots.com	£8.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
BlueCarrots Unlimited	www.bluecarrots.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Blueyonder SurfUnlimited	www.blueyonder.co.uk	£12.00	No	No	15	30	Yes	Premium – 50p
Boltblue Anytime	www.boltblue.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	National Rate
Breathe At Home	www.breathe.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathe Plus	www.breathe.com	£19.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathe Unlimited	www.breathe.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathepro Connect	www.breathe.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	25	25	Yes	Local Rate
BT Connect Lite Anytime	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£17.63	Yes	Yes	20	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
BTopenworld Anytime	www.btopenworld.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	10	50	Yes	Free
BTopenworld for BT Surf	www.btopenworld.com	£12.99	No	Yes	5	10	Yes	Free
Business Unmetered Business User	www.business-unmetered.com	£15.26	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Business Unmetered Business User 24	www.business-unmetered.com	£21.14	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Chalkface Anytime	www.chalkface.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Lite	www.charitydays.net	£29.36	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Lite	www.charitydays.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Standard	www.charitydays.net	£16.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 12	www.clara.net	£4.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 35	www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 80	www.clara.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime AnyTime	www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET Freetime Anytime Business	www.clara.net	£24.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime Unlimited	www.clara.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
Dabs netinfinity	www.dabs.net	£15.99	Yes	Yes	25	25	No	Local Rate
Datanet SurfTime Off-Peak	www.datadsl.co.uk	£16.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	0	Yes	Premium – £1.00
Demon Premier Connect	www.demon.net	£18.75	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate
dmc:dial surf:access	www.dmcdial.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
dmc:dial surf:biz	www.dmcdial.com	£23.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
dmc:dial surf:lite	www.dmcdial.com	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Fast24 Alltime	www.fast24.co.uk	£15.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Anytime	www.fast24.co.uk	£10.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Daytime	www.fast24.co.uk	£11.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Off Peak	www.fast24.co.uk	£7.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast4 Unlimited	www.fast4.net	£6.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	0	Yes	National Rate
Fasthosts FreeCall Home	dial.fasthosts.co.uk	£17.61	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	200	Yes	Standard BT
Firenet Anytime	www.firenet.uk.net	£11.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Force9 Connect Biz	www.force9.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect BizLite	www.force9.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect Heavy	www.force9.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect Lite	www.force9.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect Standard	www.force9.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Biz	www.free-online.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect BizLite	www.free-online.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Heavy	www.free-online.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Lite	www.free-online.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Standard	www.free-online.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free24-7	www.free24-7.net	£7.99	Yes	Yes	0	0	Yes	National Rate
Freechariot FC Business Unlimited	www.freechariot.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Home Lite	www.freechariot.co.uk	£5.75	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Home Off-Peak	www.freechariot.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Universal 24/7	www.freechariot.co.uk	£16.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Unlimited	www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freedom2Surf Anytime	www.freedom2surf.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Standard BT
Freeserve Anytime	www.freeserve.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freeserve HomeTime	www.freeserve.com	£12.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium – 50p
Games-World	www.games-world.net	£19.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate
Gconnect Anytime 64K	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£19.98	NK	No	1	20	NK	National Rate

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com
Net4Nowt

ISP	URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQ	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
GlenWorld	www.glen-world.co.uk	£14.95	Unk	Yes	0	0	Unk	N/A
Go-Plus	www.go-plus.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	10	Yes	Premium – 75p
ic24 Office Hours	www.ic24.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	1	0	No	Premium – 50p
Jings	www.jings.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	1	10	No	Premium – 50p
Jolt Anytime	www.jolt.co.uk	£24.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	No	N/A
MacAce BusinessDaytime	www.macace.net	£29.38	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
MacAce Homefree	www.macace.net	£12.00	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
MacAce Homefree24	www.macace.net	£16.00	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
Madasafish	www.madasafish.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	1	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
nStream	www.nstream.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	25	No	Standard BT
NTL world	www.ntl.co.uk	£10.00	No	No	15	55	Yes	Free
One Way Internet	www.onewayinternet.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 25p
OneTel	www.onetel.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	3	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1 Weekdays	www.pipex.com/	£70.21	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 3	www.pipex.com/	£46.71	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 5	www.pipex.com/	£34.96	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e	www.pipex.com/	£23.21	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz	www.plus.net	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Lite	www.plus.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Heavy User	www.plus.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Lite User	www.plus.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Standard	www.plus.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Powergen Anytime	www.pgen.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Daytime	www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Evenings & Weekends	www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Qadisho Business Unlimited	www.qadisho.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Home Lite	www.qadisho.com	£5.75	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Home Off-Peak	www.qadisho.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Universal	www.qadisho.com	£16.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Unlimited	www.qadisho.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Quicksurfer Anytime	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Business	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£15.00	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Business Plus	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£23.50	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Daytime	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Evenings & Weekends	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Evenings & Weekends	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
SafariConnect Anytime	www.safariconnect.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
SafariConnect Home&Away	www.safariconnect.com	£19.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
Silvermead Business Unlimited	www.silvermead.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Silvermead Off-Peak	www.silvermead.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Silvermead Unlimited @ Home	www.silvermead.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
SniffOut PeakTime	www.sniffout.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Local Rate
SniffOut SmartTime	www.sniffout.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – 50p
SniffOut TimeOut	www.sniffout.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – 50p
Sonnet Internet Solo 24/7	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet SoloLite 24/7	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate
Southgrove Business 24/7	www.southgrove.com	£24.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Business Daytime	www.southgrove.com	£16.50	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Surfer+	www.southgrove.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Surfer+ 24/7	www.southgrove.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Twilight Surfer	www.southgrove.com	£5.95	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
SupaNet Supahighway	www.supanet.com	£14.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Business Unlimited	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£14.08	Yes	Yes	100	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Diamond	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Diamond Plus	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£34.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	75	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Gold	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£15.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime HomeTime	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime OffPeak	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Silver	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Surfmore	www.surfmore.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	3	0	No	N/A
Tesco.net Anytime	www.tesco.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Tesco.net Daytime	www.tesco.net	£5.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
The Posh ISP	www.theposh.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Timewarp 100 Evenings & Weekends	www.timewarp.co.uk	£12.64	No	Yes	6	20	Yes	National Rate
Tiny T:Surf Value	www.tinyonline.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
TinyT:SurfPlus	www.tinyonline.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
Tiscali Anytime	www.tiscali.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
Tiscali Daytime	www.tiscali.co.uk	£5.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
Tiscali Offpeak	www.tiscali.co.uk	£11.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
V Two One Insomniac	www.v21.co.uk	£3.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – £1.00
V Two One Lite	www.v21.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – £1.00
V Two One Net Head	www.v21.co.uk	£24.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – £1.00
V Two One Small Business	www.v21.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – £1.00
V Two One Standard	www.v21.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – £1.00
Virgin.net 24seven	www.virgin.net	£13.49	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – £1.00
Vispa Connect Anytime	www.vispa.net	£14.95	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate
Vispa Connect Anytime Plus	www.vispa.net	£29.95	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate
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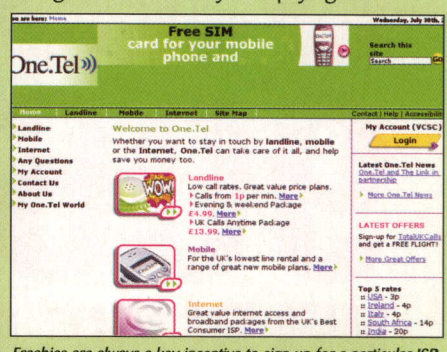
ISP TOP PICK

NAME.....Alex Waddington
POSITION.....Contributor
ISP.....OneTel Broadband (www.onetel.co.uk)

I currently use OneTel Broadband, although I shall probably be changing next month once my contract is up. I got a great offer when I joined – free modem and connection and then £27.99 a month. The service itself is pretty good, but the tech support does leave a lot to be desired. There are so many different lines to ring for different things, it's really hard to get problems sorted quickly.

At one point this year, my account was mysteriously terminated for no reason, and this took ages to sort out. It also took me a month to sort out a connection problem (ie I couldn't connect) when I first joined, and my attempts to get the first month's fee refunded were futile. So it's a good fast service when it's working, but terrible customer service.

As a backup I have Freeserve Anytime, which I have been using for three years with no problems. I can't think of a single time when the line has been busy or the connection speeds have dropped much below 53Kbps. I would definitely recommend Freeserve to a beginner, as it offers very good free online and email support. Freeserve also keeps you well informed of latest developments and changes to the service you're paying for.



Freebies are always a key incentive to sign up for a particular ISP. OneTel's free modem and activation certainly worked

The verdict

Speed: ★★★★☆
Connection stability: ★★★★☆
Technical support: ★★☆☆☆
Value for money: ★★★★☆

"It took me a month to sort out a connection problem when I first joined"

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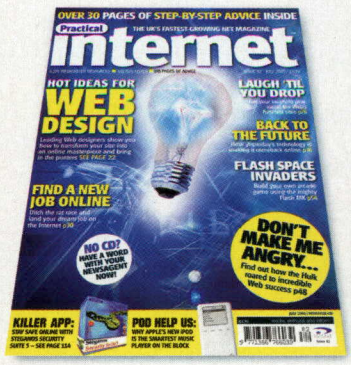

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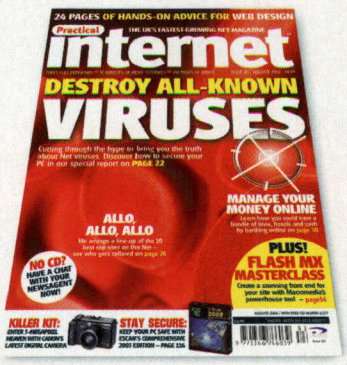

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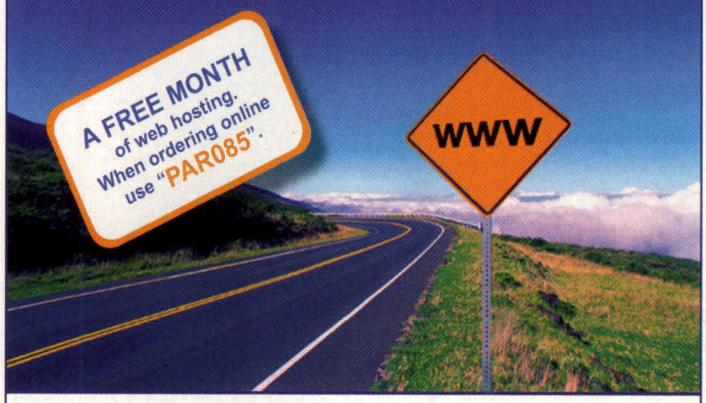

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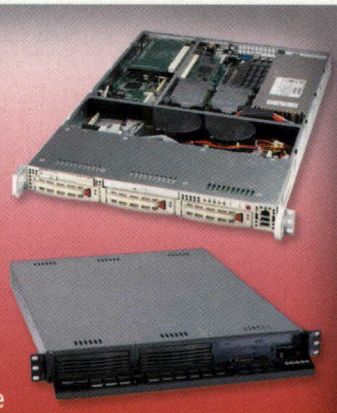

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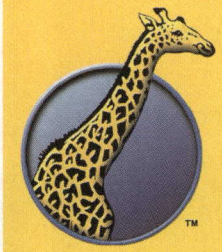

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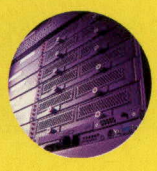

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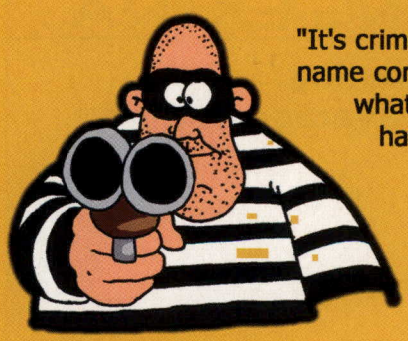

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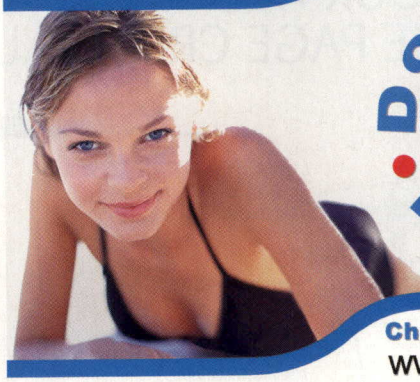

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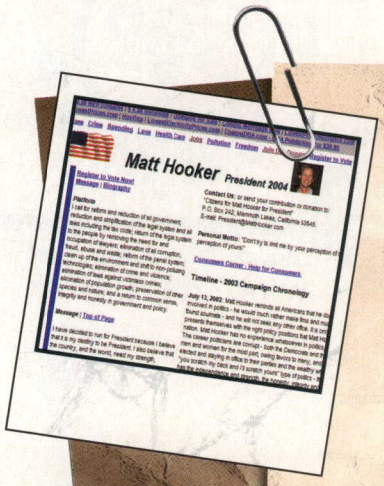


Name:
Matt Hooker

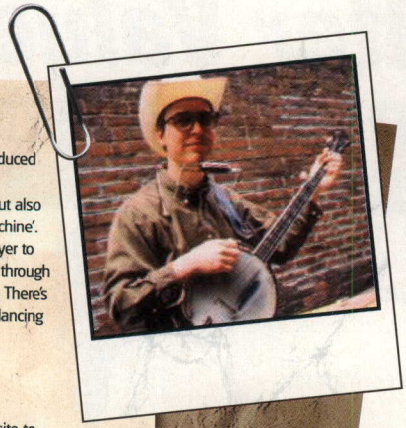
Last seen at:
www.matthooker.com

Wanted for:
Running for presidency and from the law, it seems. Matt Hooker's home page reads like a strange manifesto for all things the power-crazed candidate wants to make gospel. His diplomatic handling of the issues he sees as America's biggest problems range from describing the AIDS epidemic in a way that would make Hitler blush to woefully simplistic arguments against nuclear power and third-world debt. No one likes the fact that we pollute our planet and cause global warming, but fluffy acknowledgments that things have to change just don't work. He lacks realistic policies, and funding a NASA space station for everyone to retreat to when the earth's axis goes wonky simply won't cut it.

Characteristics:
Just as you contemplate rallying behind Mr. Hooker you get a bizarre admission. It seems wholesome Yankee boy Matt has been done for stalking. Under a section titled 'Nicole Kidman's Deformation of Matt Hooker', potential voters are told of his showbiz misdemeanour. Apparently the actress didn't take to Matt's constant pestering and filed a restraining order. It wasn't his fault of course, citing Nicole's desperation to publicise a new movie, with Matt clearly the victim of her continual snubs. He wanted her to play a part in his new script titled 'The Activist' and to erm... innocently 'date' her after he sensed mutual flirtation during a meeting.

Significant others:
Perhaps one of the funnier aspects of Matt's site is the constant use of the word 'we' when describing plans for his campaign. 'WE prefer to contact you by email' is a phrase you may expect from a man with Matt's reputation, especially if you're a certain Aussie screen star, while 'WE are now accepting contributions and donations' is just classic. But it's all this collective reference to some legitimate party that makes you laugh and cry at the same time. Matt blatantly produced the site himself, quite quickly it seems, and if he can boast a following that extends beyond Grandma Hooker then good luck. But hey, if George 'Dubya' got in then who knows? President Matt Hooker could soon be a reality – if he's kept away from any copies of *Moulin Rouge* that is.

Quote:
"Don't try to limit me by your perception of my limitations, or by your perception



Name:
Eric Royer

Last seen at:
www.guitarmachine.com

Wanted for:
How did such a gnarly rock 'n' roll domain name fall into the nimble hands of someone like Eric Royer for goodness sake? This simple site in fact showcases one of America's premier one-man bands, famed for bringing Bluegrass music back to da streets, man... and the subways, bars or wherever else his freaky instruments are allowed. Oh dear, there's always been something a little sad about the whole idea of a one-man band, we reckon. They seem to be people who always wanted to be in a band but just had no friends. Still, at least our Eric never has to endure rows about 'musical differences'. Until his fretboard twiddling foot develops a clash of egos with his mouth organ that is.

Characteristics:
Unfortunately we only have photos to go on here, which to be fair, fail to raise the profile of the one-man band to any degree. In all seriousness, Royer must be an incredibly talented bloke, however much like Rick Moranis he looks, winning acclaim right across the US and UK. Oh yes, apparently he was over for the famous 'One-Man Band Festival' in Lancaster before over-excited crowds turned the event somewhat sour. In fact, Eric has produced numerous albums that are not only testament to his songwriting skills but also to his adeptness with the 'guitar machine'. He built it himself. It enables the player to strum both acoustic guitar and bass through a series of cogs, wheels and pedals. There's even a cowbell, and the obligatory dancing puppet... Good lordy lord.

Significant others:
The question we really want Eric's site to answer is whether picking Bluegrass music with every conceivable limb, in public, gets the girls. Let's face it, that's why any red-blooded male takes up music and Mr. Royer is surely no exception. By rights he should get all the groupies that his non-existent backing band would normally command. Not only is he the front man, he's the rhythm and lead guys plus drummer, one imagines, rolled into one. Come to think of it he makes his own instruments too, while no guitar tech on the planet would even consider touching Eric's 'guitar machine' without an honours degree in 'What the hell is that!'.

Quote:
"Royer is one crazy multi-instrumentalist"

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